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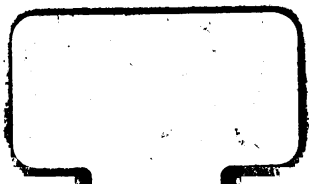
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Letters







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LETTERS OF "AN ENGLISHMAN"

ON

LOUIS NAPOLEON,

THE EMPIRE, AND THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

REPRINTED, WITH LARGE ADDITIONS,

FROM

*The Times.*

LONDON:

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ORCHARD STREET, WESTMINSTER.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

I PUBLISH these Letters for these reasons. They are calculated, I believe,—they are meant, I know,—to elevate the tone of public life; to fortify the sense of public honour; to brand a paltry and a huckstering statecraft; to blow up political quackery and shams.

Is that a worthy aim?

To denounce tyranny; strip the tinsel from success; tear the mask from the leprous visage of hypocrisy; aroynt the juggling fiend of Jesuitism; champion the rights of intelligence and reason; and trumpet the historic and eternal truth, that Despotism is national degradation and decay—Freedom, prosperity and virtue.

Is that a noble object?

Why should I speak of myself? Like Beppo,

“I am but a nameless sort of person,”

and my individuality neither adds to the truth of what I write nor takes from it. The force of these Letters derives from the convictions—their indignation issues from the

conscience—their accuracy from acquaintance with the present—their predictions from the study of the past.

Good or bad, they are the work of one whose only interest is that of truth—whose whole ambition is to serve his country—whose faith is an undying love of liberty—whose pride is to be worthy to sustain her banner—whose boast is never to desert her ranks—whose trust is serene and unfaltering in her victory—and whose simple title is the highest he aspires to or these times can give,

AN ENGLISHMAN.

## TO MEN OF ALL OPINIONS.

IF Europe now comprehends M. Bonaparte, and the coup d'état, it did not on the 2nd of December. It dreamt that society was really in danger from millions of banded brigands; that parliamentary sedition was *en permanence*; and that Louis Napoleon solicited the revision of the Constitution, to save the world from anarchy and communism, himself from conspiracy and vengeance.

The real character of that Prætorian revolution and imperial plot was slowly seen, more slowly owned, and still more inadequately understood. It was imagined to reflect the wish of France—it represented only the audacity of its contriver; it was supposed to re-establish order and authority—it crowned treason, perjury, and anarchy; it was expected to decapitate the communistic hydra—it sowed the dragon's teeth of pillage and of murder; it was hoped to sustain the altar and the throne—it has made the Jesuit the flamen of the first, a mountebank the opprobrium of the last; it was believed to be the harbinger of peace to Europe—it inaugurates an Iliad of confusion or of war.

The world owes something to the press. It has nobly vindicated the eternal principles of Christianity, morality, and

justice—the inalienable rights of humanity itself. It has already received one instalment of its triumph. The Parliament and “statesmen” of Great Britain, forgetting what was due to their traditions and themselves, denounced journalism, flattered a criminal, and excused a crime. With Machiavellian policy and shifty craft, unsuited to the country, and unworthy of the age, they professed their confidence in the intentions of a man, against whom their conscience and their common sense have driven them to national defence. The blasés pupils of an used-up school, whose chivalry is the St. Leger, whose principle is the thimble and the *little* pea, had to learn, it seems, that in politics, as in geometry, the right line is the shortest, that the honest is the bold course, and the bold course is the safest.

The acts of men obey a logic, as rigorous, at the least, as the disputations of the books. A political convulsion is the natural conclusion of recognizable premises, or a link in the demonstration of a social problem. Revolutions do not shoot, like meteors, from the clouds, to bury themselves in the soil.

When Tarquin the Proud was driven from Rome, and replaced by the Consular Republic, its civic virtues, its military glories, its genius, its wealth, its corruption, and its fall, were a chain of natural sequences. The usurpation of Augustus was the symbol and effect of a profligate senate, a debauched soldiery, and a pauper plebs. The base and effeminate descendants of Camillus cared only for their suppers and their fishponds—the legions clamoured for lands in Italy, not for combats on the frontiers—and the tribes of Rome craved only idleness, largesses of corn, and the Circensian games. For such a people there *could* only be a tyrant.

The Augustan age and the imperial system were the sure precursors of the Lower Empire. Absolute despotism is murder in the palace, rebellion in the camp, demoralization and degeneracy in the nation, domestic sloth, slavery, and subjugation. It is Livia and Messalina—Tiberius and Caracalla—Augustulus and the Barbarians.

The “era of the Cæsars,” which we see to-day, was hatched in conspiracy, baptized in blood, mounted by bribery, sanctified by blasphemy, and sustained by force. It sprung from perjury to march by lies. It proscribes capacity, denounces independence, damns intelligence, and strangles liberty. Its conditions of existence are the ignorance of the masses, the obedience of the sword, and the lasting domination of hypocrisy, superstition, and corruption. A military revolution, its cry must be “to arms,” and its destiny is either mutiny or war.

There is a class of Politicians who ignore history, despise the past, and recognise no present, nor any future, but their own impossible Utopia. In their horoscope, the autocracy of M. Bonaparte signifies nothing but free trade and peace. From the annihilation of popular liberty, these Sidrophels predict commercial license. The hawk *may* hatch the dove, the tigress rear the lamb. M. Bonaparte *may* act the imperial suicide and slay his own power and system. Be it so. The world will be the gainer and these prophets will be right.

While this millennium of brotherhood is in the air, we encounter the fratricides of earth. They gather round us. A league is struck between the chasseur and the priest, and between tyranny and both. The foul triumvirate would divide the world. The crusade is preached, nay, it is begun, against liberty and reason—

the bayonet for the one, the Inquisition for the other. Jesuitism promises the restoration of "authority," and demands the dominion of the intellect. The watchword of each is "thorough." Sacerdotal audacity threatens to pass the whole human race beneath its Caudine Forks.

Men of all creeds and all opinions, up ! for the Philistines are upon you. Tyranny musters its savage legions ; Jesuitism drills its black recruits. Its hellish net is spread for two generations. It seizes the father and it claims the child. It would indoctrinate the son with hypocrisy, impiety, immorality, and lies—seduce the daughter—and debauch the wife. Conservatives and Liberals, Catholics and Protestants beware, be firm, close *your* ranks ; for those of despotism, night, and obscurantism are bristling, serried, and advancing.

# LOUIS NAPOLEON.

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## LETTER I.

### THE COUP D'ÉTAT.\*

FRANCE claims and maintains the terrible prerogative of concentrating on herself the attention and solicitude of Europe. By her geographical position, her military genius, her daring theories, and her ancient fickleness, she is alternately a planet to illuminate the world, and a bloody meteor to affright it.

For the last three years, the English public has been singularly wrong in its estimate of facts and its anticipations of the future. The dominant ideas with it and with the press were dislike of the Republic, dread and horror of the Socialists, sympathy at first, injustice afterwards, towards the majority of the Legislative Assembly, and blindness to the character, the designs, and machinations of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. The perjury of that arch traitor is too patent now to be denied, although there are parties who, in public and in private, from ignorance or from interest, gloss over it.

I believe that it is of paramount importance to our material interests to appreciate the real nature of the present crisis, and

\* *Times*, December 20, 1851.



to exert that moral force of opinion, which, justly formed and rightly exercised, is not absolutely powerless, even against half a million bayonets.

If ever a party has been harshly treated by writers of all classes in this country, it is that of the modern French Republicans. They comprise a great part of the courage of the nation, and the major portion of its principle. Come what may, it will survive, and whatever dynasty or despotism is fated to rule France, will always have to count with *it*. After all the opprobrium lavished upon those Republicans, what crime have they committed? Did the revolution of 1848 massacre peaceful citizens, pour musketry and grape into the mansions of the Boulevards, shoot its prisoners in cold blood, and install a reign of terror? It did not. It suffered Louis Philippe to escape. It forgot the slaughter of the Rue Transnonain, and left its worst enemy, Thiers, unharmed. It abolished the punishment of death for treason, and held out a more cordial hand to England than she had ever grasped before, or, perhaps, may grasp again. Will National Guards, under the new *régime*, be permitted to charter excursion trains to London; or will another lord mayor and a posse of aldermen intrust themselves to "the sabre and the vote" which reign at the Hotel de Ville? The Republic dared one other act of magnanimity—it cancelled the proscription of the Bonapartes. For that *they* have rewarded it.

I do not defend the extravaganzas of Socialism, but Socialists and Republicans are not convertible terms. Be the former what they may, their errors are those of imperfect reasoning, which time, the practice of political rights, experience, and reason itself would remedy. A market has been made of the fears of Frenchmen and ignorance of Englishmen in the denunciation of Socialism. Was it proposed to diminish the duties on consump-

tion, to reduce the army, to organize a tax on property, to mitigate the code of bankruptcy, to attempt a poor-law—to imitate, in fact, that legislation which almost all parties sanction here—and the hue and cry of “Socialism” was instantly got up against the unfortunate Republicans. Had Sir Robert Peel been in the French Legislature, he would have been hunted down as a malignant Socialist. Socialism has been, and at this moment is, “the raw head and bloody bones” of power, hoisted to terrify the timid and the ignorant into voting away their liberties.

The majority of the Legislative Assembly destroyed themselves and the Assembly too. Their blindness and fatuity have struck a deadly blow at parliamentary government in France. Their sympathies were always opposed to the Republic—their policy to undermine and overthrow it. Louis Napoleon and they were in league; and from the very day of his election, they combined to crush Republican feeling, to harass and oppress the Republicans themselves, and by every artifice, calumny, and violence, to render them contemptible and odious. Together, they planned and carried out the expedition to Rome; together, they consigned the primary teachers to absolute beggary and ruin; together, they committed education to the Jesuits; together, they degraded the University, and laid it at the feet of those same Jesuits; together, they burked universal suffrage, of which they both were born, because, disgusted with their reactionary measures, the electors of Paris had given a vote against them; together, they postponed the most urgent laws on the communal organization, the municipal bodies, and the National Guard, and falsified in them the elective principle; together, they perpetrated every kind of illegality, sanctioning the most iniquitous abuse of preventive arrests, arbitrary imprisonments, sham plots, and police conspiracies; together, they dis-

played the grossest partiality in allowing or prohibiting the sale of journals in the streets; together, they passed the law on signatures, to entrap and crush the journalists; and, together, they kept whole Departments of France for nearly three years in the state of siege, on the most flimsy of pretences. Let the majority look back and ask itself for *whose* profit it forgot its duties, outraged justice, and violated the Constitution it invokes in vain.

I turn to Louis Napoleon. In exile and in youth a Socialist writer—a volunteer in the patriot army of Italy—a companion of the loosest section of the English aristocracy—the hero of the conspiracies of Strasburg and Boulogne—the breaker of his word to Louis Philippe—the proscribed of the monarchy—the recalled of the Republic—he had given, indeed, few gages to order, to honour, or his country, when he became its citizen.

The Republican Constitution was framed, the respective powers of the legislative and executive departments were distinctly and carefully defined, the subordination of the President and the duration of the Presidency were as distinctly declared; and, knowing this, Louis Napoleon was a candidate for the office with all its obligations, was elected, and solemnly swore to observe them “in the presence of God and man.” On two different occasions he volunteered to renew that sacred promise, and on a third he declared in a message to the nation that he should “set his honour” on the keeping of it. Words, oaths, and honour—where are they now?

He had scarcely passed the threshold of the Elysée when he commenced his game. That game was to madden the Republicans by outrages, and to make their excesses, real or pretended, the bugbear of the timid and the servile; to hold up the Socialism that he goaded into violence *in terrorem* over the majority, and to lead it to commit itself irrevocably with the

nation in its reactionary course ; to make that majority believe he was indispensable to *it*, and France that he was equally indispensable to *her*. His calculation was, that in spite of the Constitution he had sworn to, his re-election would be got by the majority's connivance.

But never from the first was that re-election the term of his ambition. Like his uncle, he, too, had his star, and that assured him empire. At the very time that he was practising on the credulity and fears of the majority, he was sapping the respect for parliamentary government by the ignominious dismissal of the Barrot Ministry, his contemptuous Messages, his announcement that France desired to feel his "hand and will," and by hounding on the journals in his pay against all parties but himself. His progresses in the departments, his bearing, his addresses, were those of an Imperial Pretender—his Society of the 10th of December, an organised band of hired ruffians, were instructed to cry, wherever the opportunity was possible, "*Vive l'Empereur !*"—and his intrigues with the army assumed a definite shape. Men of all opinions in the Legislative Assembly became seriously alarmed, but were paralysed by mutual distrust, and opposed no material resistance to him. They almost seemed to hug themselves with the belief that legality was a defence against conspiracy and force.

The banquets to the sub-officers, the champagne, the toasts, and the reviews, disclosed a continuity of purpose and a determination to debauch the soldiery calculated to open the eyes of all. Still men could scarcely bring themselves to think that he would dare the last extremity of perjury and treason, or that the chivalry of France could be purchased by cigars and sausages. The discipline of General Nieumayer probably prevented the return of Louis Napoleon as Emperor from the plains of Satory.

Changarnier and his lieutenant were dismissed, and a heavy blow was struck at the Assembly. The Republicans dreaded the majority and their captain almost as much as Bonaparte, and the military power of the Parliament was gone.

The *illegal* revision of the Constitution would have suited Louis Napoleon, because the prolongation of the Presidency would have given him time and opportunity. The prefects did what force and fraud could do to further the petition movement, while the bulk of the majority itself joined in it. We know their alarm at M. Bonaparte's designs, and it is impossible to imagine, unless they were indeed the veriest of dolts, that this co-operation was sincere. Either they dreamt that the revision might be turned to the profit of the Monarchy, or, knowing that the minority could *legally* prevent it, they hoped that they might safely conciliate the President. However that might be, it is nothing but the height of impudence to state, and ignorance to fancy, that the bulk of those who signed the petitions were Bonapartists. The movement was, in the main, monarchical.

Revision failed, and from that moment Napoleon's mind was made up. It is impossible to exaggerate the caution and the cunning which marked each step. Ministerial crises distracted the Assembly, and were meant to render it contemptible. Menaces in the journals of the Government defied it; reports of *coups d'état*, never intended to be realized, were spread, to lull into a false security, and to mask the real one when it arrived; well affected regiments were kept in Paris or were drawn to it, while those that were suspected were drafted to the provinces or to Algeria. Bonapartist generals and colonels made the most incendiary appeals against the people to the troops under their orders; change after change in the Ministry of War and in the command of the army of Paris conducted at last to the right

instruments—reckless men, of as desperate fortunes as those of the Elysée itself; and when all was prepared, came the long-expected appeal to the democracy in the bill for the restoration of universal suffrage. In spite of all warning and all entreaties, the insane leadership of Berryer and Thiers induced the majority to throw it out, though only by two doubtful votes. This decision would have been speedily reversed had Napoleon really desired it. The rejection was his stock-in-trade of popularity, and he hastened to make the most of it. The last affront and fatal injury was done to the Assembly, by tearing down from the barrack walls the declaration of right, which the Constitution gave it, of demanding directly military force for its defence. The Questors' Bill, defining this right, was thrown out by the Republicans, who, placed between two enemies, dreaded for the moment Changarnier and the majority the most. Even now it is difficult to say what their conduct should have been; for, though the passing of the measure would have hurried on the combat, and might have prevented the surprise, it would have given a more colourable pretext for violence.

The Responsibility Bill (one of strict right and necessity) was sent down by the Council of State. It was too late. Napoleon saw that the decisive moment had arrived. If that bill was law, his instruments might quail before the penalties of treason. The troops, distinctly apprised of their duties, might hesitate when the order came to violate them, and the Assembly would be too well prepared to fall before a *coup de main*. His plan was laid with consummate craft. Abortive rumours of *coups d'état* fell thick as hail on Paris, till men scarce knew whether to dread or laugh at them; the insults of the Government journals were redoubled; and the day was fixed for the election of a representative. Before that day arrived, despatches were sent to all

the prefects to be prepared for a Socialist outbreak in the capital, on the occasion of the declaration of the poll. Fresh regiments were concentrated in its neighbourhood under the same pretence; the garrison was ordered under arms; and the military movements were on such a scale, that the *National* inquired on the morning of the 1st, "What dark intentions lurked behind them?"

No Socialists appeared, or had ever been expected; the day was one of profound calm; the majority congratulated itself on the triumph of order in the person of M. Devink; night came, and Paris slept; and before it awoke on the 2nd of December, the *coup d'état* was struck.

I shall say nothing of its details, nor of the horrors that have followed. They are written in blood on the memory of France. But can any man doubt, who knows her history for the last three years, that Louis Napoleon has never for one instant ceased to conspire, since the Republic admitted him a citizen—that he marched with the majority while the majority could be made his tools and might become his instruments—that he broke with it as soon as it saw through his designs, and lyingly appealed to the suffrage he had mutilated—that his Presidential reign was one long juggle with the fears of one class by goading another to despair—that he has systematically debauched the army, and effected a treacherous and bloody revolution by paid Prætorian bands—that he has violated the most solemn, reiterated, and voluntary oaths taken "before God and man"—and that he has compassed a military despotism more debasing and debased, more universal and more ruthless than France has ever groaned under?

Can this endure? I am not an atheist, and I answer No! The wrath of Heaven does not blast, in our days, Ananias with

the lie upon his lips. The Christian world does not deify Nemesis, but she still exists, and still, perhaps, is lame. The logic of crime is retribution. The perjured traitor who now rules France rules by terror only. The sanction of that treason by universal suffrage is too gross a sham to need exposure, and too bitter a mockery even for derision. He governs by and for the army, and the power that made can by one shout unmake him. He bought with hard cash its bayonets and its votes—he must still continue to buy. The donatives of the Lower Empire have commenced already. The butchers of the *bourgeoisie* are on war allowance. The officers have got promotion and gratuities—no man knows how much. Marshals of France have been created, and a Council of Five is “in the air.”

But this military tyrant is not himself a soldier. He

“Never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the divisions of a battle knows  
More than a spinster.”

Cromwell and the first Napoleon were the great captains of their age; their lieutenants had served, their armies had been formed under them, and both were bound to them by a common glory—not, as to this man, by a common crime. *He* is dependent wholly on his generals; the state of siege compels the concentration of enormous forces in the several military divisions of France, under some half-dozen chiefs. Who is to answer for their fidelity and for their accord? When jealousies spring up, as they certainly will, can the puppet of the Elysée appease them? “Give, give,” will be the cry; and woe to him when he refuses. Can the rotten financial system of France sustain the inevitable prodigality? Whence will the money come? From the people? I dare him to increase taxation. Socialist that he was, madman



and impostor that I believe him to be, he talks of shifting and of lightening it. The abolition of the *octrois* and the wine-tax is possible on *one* condition—the reduction of the army. The Republic *might* do that—he cannot. Will he borrow? Will you capitalists of England lend? Is the experience of Spain, of Portugal, of Austria lost upon you? You cannot be such idiots as to pitch your ingots into the gulf of this despot's wants, and of the sure repudiation of a future France. Will he rush to war? For what? That matters not. Any pretext is enough for him who laughs at truth and oaths. But he cannot assail the military despotisms of the continent. They are his natural allies, and their tyrannies prop his own. The old Republic conquered to the cry of liberty, and Napoleon but completed, under the flag of despotism, what that cry had commenced. Did the modern Republic march its battalions into Germany with "Liberation of the people" on its banners, the issue might be fearful for the houses of Hohenzollern and of Hapsburgh. But no shout of freedom can be raised by this man's janissaries, and they must face the hatred of the German people as well as the discipline of German hosts.

It is England that he dreads, and on England he must war, if he war at all. But war has its special perils for him. If he fail, he is damned past saving; if he succeed, it must be by the hands of others. Will some new "hero of a hundred fights" be content to work for him? Why should he? The usurpation of Napoleon is a school and a lesson for usurpers. War with England has its peculiar dangers. Steam has done much for France, but it has done more for us; the alliance with America looms larger and nearer; and, sad as it is to think of such strife, I believe that, ere many campaigns were past, the commerce of our enemy would be extinguished—his ports would be blockaded

—his mercantile marine laid up, or prizes in the British harbours—his fleet sunk, burnt, or captured—and his naval power a tradition.

The struggle, however, is probable—perhaps imminent. We may confide in God and our right, but we may not be supine. We have to deal with duplicity, faithlessness and daring, reckless professions, stealthy preparations, and a sudden blow. The lover of peace must be ready for war, and Mr. Cobden cannot *now* recommend us to disarm. Our house must be put in order. No more quarrels with our colonies; a speedy end to Caffre campaigns; concentration at home of disposable troops; an efficient maritime force in the Channel and in the harbours most accessible to France; wise concessions to public opinion, and consequent combination of all classes.

Men are too apt to forget the past and to take counsel of their passions. Charles X. fell because he *attempted* despotism, Louis Philippe because he refused reform, the Legislative Assembly because it was reactionary, and Louis Napoleon has triumphed to the cry of universal suffrage. If such a bait could hook democratic journalists here, can we wonder if French workmen and soldiers should have swallowed it? Time will undeceive them, and the moral is to come.

If there be a man who is *not* to be envied, that man is Louis Napoleon. A self-convicted perjurer, an attainted traitor, a conspirator successful by the foulest treachery, the purchase of the soldiery, and the butchery of thousands, he must, if not cut short in his career, go all the lengths of tyranny. For him there is no halt, for his system no element of either stability or progress. It is a hopeless and absolute anachronism. The Presidential chair or the Imperial throne is set upon a crater—the soil is volcanic, undermined; and trembling—the steps are

slippery with blood—and the darkening steam of smouldering hatred, conspiracy, and vengeance, is exhaling round it. Each party can furnish its contingents for tyrannicide; the assassin dogs him in the street; and even at the balls or banquets of the Elysée he may find the fate of Gustavus. He who has been false to all must only look for falsehood, and is doomed to daily and to nightly fears of mutinies, insurrections, and revenge. Conscience cannot be altogether stifled, and will sometimes obtrude, in her horrible phantasmagoria, the ghastly corpses of the Boulevards.

But where is the national party in his favour, of which we heard so much? I see no sign of it. The army has been corrupted and inflamed by appeals to its basest and bloodiest instincts,—the Jesuits are enlisted by the earnest and the promise of spiritual and material plunder,—the timid are terrified by the past, the present, and the future,—the servile, of the Baroque class, are crawling, belly in the dust, to place and pension,—and the foul herd of sycophants and parasites that suck the strength and blood of power in France—the *roué*, the gambler, and the desperate in character and fortune—choke the doorways of the Elysée. If Napoleon has a party at all in the country, it is among those Socialist workmen whom he has seduced with hopes and has begun to bribe with largesses. The peasantry may be on his side, but three years' experience has cooled, if it has not worn out, their enthusiasm, and the fiercest resistance to his usurpation has been encountered in the rural districts. He is playing his old game of bamboozling the Legitimists, as well as some of the chiefs of the Orleanists. They must be fools indeed to help to consolidate his tyranny.

If this man's reign is destined to continue, even for a brief duration, the world will witness the most heterogeneous jumble

of despotism and of demagoguy, of Socialism and corruption, that history has ever chronicled. The bribery of Walpole, the theories of labour of Louis Blanc, the stockjobbing of the worst days of Louis Philippe, the ferocity of Alva, the deportations of the Czar, the razzias of Algeria, will all meet in one marvellous system of anarchy that will be called Imperial Government. Its great aim and object are to gag the country and to "rig" the market; and under this patent of *tranquillity* and *order* France will be one vast military hell, with Louis Napoleon for its *croupier*.

## LETTER II.

## THE PLÉBISCITE.\*

EVENTS whirl on in France with melodramatic celerity, and almost every night the curtain drops on some new *tableau* with surpassing *poses plastiques*. History is out of breath in keeping up with fact, and puzzled Europe gazes with a fascinated stare on the dissolving views of principles and government which are now exhibited for its instruction. It sees a civilian at the head of an army enlisting the votes of a people which that army is engaged in butchering. It sees the self-elected champion of "order" defying the laws of God and man. It sees the defender of the social ties arresting, imprisoning, shooting, and transporting all whom it suits him to suspect. It sees the obsequious son of the Church, the promulgator of decrees for the observance of the Sabbath, organising a stupendous system of lies. It sees the vaunted protector of "property" confiscating and beggaring whole classes at his pleasure. It sees the companion of Louis Blanc protesting that he only can uproot Socialism, and making himself absolute to practise it. It sees the happy era of a "strong" Government in France, that millennium of the moneyed class, living from hour to hour upon fear and fraud. It sees played on the stage of to-day the grimaces, the madness,

\* *Times*, January 9, 1852.

the crimes of the last century. It sees a buried generation of mountebanks galvanized into life again, and scaring the world with guilt and passions that even the least trustful in the destinies of man had thought to be a blotted page of history. It sees the *élite* of a gallant nation prostrate in the mire and bleeding from innumerable wounds, impotent for vengeance, more alive to its shame than to its sufferings, and humiliated at the disgrace of that very soldiery which had been employed in sabring it. It sees a *Te Deum* celebrated for perjury, massacre, and treason. And it sees a Jesuit bishop proclaim, with the last audacity of blasphemy, that *their* triumph is due to the "GRATITUDE" of God.

All that is truthful and illustrious, honest and brave in France, out of the military pale, is opposed to this foul tyranny. But whatever our sympathies, we have not the right, nor can we have the wish, to interfere. Those sympathies we may express, for in Britain thought and speech are free, and our glorious press unmuzzled; but the question is one of internal French policy, and it is for Frenchmen to decide it.

Non-interference of any kind, or for any party, must be the watchword of this Country. Her honour and her interests alike demand it. She holds in trust the liberties of Europe, and woe to them and her if she rashly compromise or cravenly betray them. No man can mark the hour on the dial when the great struggle shall commence, no man can indicate the spot where it will burst forth, the precise shape it will assume; but come, when, and where, and how it may, it will be despotism against freedom, retrogression against progress, brute force against ideas, the past against the future, and military tyranny against England.

There are some who affect a decent moderation, profess a

comfortable satisfaction, and would propose to us a vote of confidence. We must suspect either their honesty or intellects. The second Napoleon apes but to exaggerate the first. Has the nephew forgotten the tradition of "Perfidious Albion?" Has he forgiven Waterloo and St. Helena? Waterloo! Perhaps you did not mark those words of fire in his proclamation to the troops, when he turned their bayonets on the National Assembly, their cannon on the citizens of Paris:—

"We are associated in a common misfortune and a common glory."

The glory, I presume, is Wagram, Austerlitz, Marengo, with which we were not previously aware that *this* Napoleon was concerned. The misfortune can be only Waterloo. There his uncle's hosts were routed; there his dynasty was overthrown. Can any man believe that a revolution, whose watchword was that fatal field, will not be pointed against us?

The old women of both sexes, in the press and out of it, are prodigal of their assurances. The knight of the Eglintoun tournament, the guest of the "Junior United," the diner-out of Belgravia, the special constable of April, can never forget the delightful ties that must grow out of such situations. The simplicity is charming, but the confidence is premature. Is there no plot hatching at this moment? De Persigny, the genius of mischief, is everywhere. What bait is offered to the Czar? What bribe to Austria? What sinister rumours agitate the borders of the Rhine—rumours received, contradicted, repeated, like those that preceded the *coup d'état*? Why those significant hints to Belgium, Switzerland, Piedmont? Why those menaces to England for harbouring refugees? Does continental Europe intend to pass a Political Fugitive Bill, and enforce its provisions here? That would be indeed ingratitude. Who sheltered Louis

Napoleon, and from whose coasts steered the invader of Boulogne? Where did Metternich find repose after his flight from Vienna? Who was the host of the Prince of Prussia? Could the Sultan shield Kossuth from the axe of Austria and brave the threats of Russia? and shall England, the traditional asylum of the vanquished, eject them at the imperious bidding of despots, bar them their only homes in the Old World, and consign *them* to the humanity, *herself* to the scorn, of the New? Shall we become the spies and the police of Europe, keep lists of the proscribed, and draw up categories of the suspected? Will the ghost of Castlereagh direct the Home-office, and will Canning have unyoked us from the dray of the Holy Alliance in vain? The want of foresight equals that of memory. Tyranny is not so sure of its game as to bar all chances to Democracy. When the turn of the wheel shall bring that uppermost, it may not be inconvenient for the rulers of to-day to seek safety in Britain. But if we now succumb to their demands, how can we resist the similar demands of their successors? It is the interest of all governors and governments in Europe that some country should be free to their misfortunes, and that, taking no cognizance of creed or cause, it should receive as fugitives and protect as guests whoever fly from political vengeance, and conform to the laws of the land that shelters them.

The election of Louis Napoleon is, no doubt, an immense event. It will, and it must, affect the destinies of Europe, and probably those of the other hemisphere. But the mere consideration of the numbers that determined it would create a false impression of it. We must analyse its elements, inquire its signification, and see whether its result be as conclusive as it seems.



Are the numbers accurate? What guarantee is there for that? Who can check the returns? Where is the scrutiny? Who are the scrutineers? The Consultative Commission abandoned *their* task in despair. There is no publicity. None but the creatures of the Government are present; none but its veriest tools know the truth, and if they dared to give it utterance, the journey would be short from the Mairie to the Conciergerie, and certain from the Conciergerie to Cayenne. If something like a latent sense of decency and a politic regard for probability afford some chances for reality in Paris, they cannot be looked for in the provinces. The telegraph carries to each department the expectations of the Government and the announcement of fabulous successes. Shall the mayor or the prefect be behind the rest? Shall his return be a shabby one? Shall his commune, town, or district cut a paltry figure in the national adoration of the rising star of the Tuileries? He must know little of mayors or prefects who could harbour a thought so unworthy of their patriotism and their prudence. In the servile race of flattery and falsehood functionary vies with functionary, lie surpasses lie. The only limit is the calculation of what will not bear too hard on the gullibility of France.

Did a man deliberately fabricate returns; he would select, of course, the remotest districts for his boldest efforts. By a singular coincidence, this is just what is observed in this election. In Paris and in Lyons the majority is not too gross for belief; in the Departments it defies arithmetic and credibility. Boileau has said that the *vrai* is not always the *vraisemblable*. This, I presume, is an instance of it. History will never know, not even the Government itself can tell, what the real majority is. But credit what we may to forgery and falsehood, it is still

gigantic. Its proportions are colossal, but they are those of Nebuchadnezzar's image—the feet a brittle mixture of iron and of clay.

A majority, to form a base for power, must have something like solidity and homogeneousness. If its parts are incongruous or antagonistic, its hour of trial is that of dissolution, and it resolves, like every rotten organism, into its constituent elements. The “great party of order,” which has strutted for three years upon the stage of France, was such a majority as this, and we have seen what an unsubstantial phantom it proved before one resolute will. The majority of to-day is more monstrous still. It is the pandemonium of all opinions and all passions, of hopes and fears, of disappointments and of hatreds, of traditions and delusions, of Jesuitism and of ignorance, of curses and despair.

The Legitimists are split, as usual. The *petits maîtres* of the Quartier St. Germain have polled. The peasantry of the west have followed the priests, and swelled the majority in some districts, while they have abstained in others. The chiefs and the old feudal proprietary have generally held aloof. What the exact proportion of affirmative Legitimist votes may be, it is, of course, impossible to say, although they are not an inconsiderable element in the Napoleonic array.

The Orleanists have rallied with more alacrity to the standard of expediency and force. They form the bulk of the mercantile class, and no small portion of the shopkeepers. The dominant caste under Louis Philippe, they stocked the Chamber of Deputies, and furnished their quota to the Peerage; the Exchange was theirs, the patronage of Government was theirs; they officered if they did not man the National Guard; their sons and nephews got all that could be got at the Lyceums, the Polytechnic, the School of St. Cyr; *concessionnaires* of the railways, contractors

and engineers of the public works, the cream of the 240,000 electors—bribed and bribing, corrupting and corrupt—they thronged the saloons of Guizot and the levees of the old King; they were the *satisfais* of the Minister, the courtiers of the Monarch, whose suppers they devoured, whose person they caricatured, whose measures they supported, whose dynasty they ruined, and at whose fall they basely fled. Those who know the *haute bourgeoisie* the best, despise it most. The heroes of the school of Paul de Kock, *sans foi ni loi*, heedless of the past, faithless in the future, true only to the material instincts of the present, greedy of gain, lavish of expenditure, and gross in pleasures, these Sybarites of trade enact the *Decameron* without its poetry, and make Paris a new Capua, or—something worse. It is idle to look to such a class for courage, loyalty, or truth. Indifferent to civil or religious liberty, dead to every generous aspiration, blind to all but their immediate interests, their cuckoo cry is eternally for “order,” and they vote for any man or system that boldly promises to give it them. They support Louis Napoleon now—they would equally support, if *his* turn arrived, Henry V. or the Count of Paris, M. Proudhon or the Devil.

The Jesuits, Montalembert at their head, have marched with reverted cowls and unfurled banners to the ballot. They have taken with them a million of the faithful. It costs them nothing to sanctify crime, for did not their Chief proclaim, with the very cynicism of immorality, at the tribune, that, “whatever is possible is right?” In their eyes, the “expedition of Rome in the interior” has now really commenced. The primary schools were already in their hands, the Panthéon is restored to them, the chairs of philosophy are falling or have fallen, the gates of the University are yielding to their blows, some works are pro-

scribed, all will be expurgated; their writers,\* who lamented that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was incomplete, that Luther was not burnt, and that the Inquisition was suspended, hope, if they do not trust, that the Holy Office will revive; their bishops impiously press Heaven itself into their ranks, while Paul Cullen promises the co-operation of St. Patrick;† and both prove to the astonished world that hypocrisy is never so hypocritical, nor blasphemy so blasphemous, as on a Jesuit's lips.

The Attila of Socialism has contrived to bag a respectable number of Socialist votes. This is evident in Paris, and is still more palpable in the department of the Cher, the Nièvre, and the Saone et Loire. They were placed under the state of siege, because it was pretended that Socialism was rampant in them. Yet the suffrage returns make almost the whole adult population in favour of Louis Napoleon. What an *olla podrida* of lies this discloses! But it ought to be remembered that the proclamations to the people denounced Monarchy, affected the defence of the Republic, and promised mysterious boons to the Democracy. His emissaries went every length, and the gagging of the press most probably conceals a system of canvassing which has never had a parallel for audacity, immorality, and falsehood.

Terror was meant to play, and has played, the lion's part. It has been carried out with the refinement of atrocity. Is it possible to conceive that *such* a revolution and election could leave the departmental electors the faintest glimmer of liberty? The eye of the prefect or his myrmidons was on them, delation tracked them, the sabre was suspended over them, proscription

\* In the *Univers*.

† See their prayers and pastorals, *passim*.

and deportation were before them, and the demand was plainly, "Your vote or your money—your vote or your life."

In every country, those who are qualified to reason for themselves are a small minority. In France, superstition, centralization, the predominance of the agricultural element, the conscription, the exclusion till the last three years from the elective franchise, have educated and kept the bulk of the population in a state of political childishness and ignorance that is scarcely conceivable by Englishmen. No bugbear is too gross, no sham too stale, no promises too impudent, no imposture too barefaced for their credulity. France is, with all its cleverness, the land of *gobemouches*. Their novelists laughed at them, their journalists lived upon them, and their tyrants have invariably ruled by them. They worshipped, as no other people could, the name of Napoleon Bonaparte. Some really believed that the nephew was the uncle—the majority swallowed miraculous stories of his wealth—they thought that out of his private purse the national taxation would be lightened—they were convinced that he alone prevented Socialism from devouring them—they had not a doubt that the Assembly was the obstacle to his conferring incomprehensible benefits upon the country—they never tired of *spectres rouges*, "committees of resistance," conspiracies, and plots—they hated the press, because they were assured it was the instrument of anarchy—they hated the tribune, because it was merely *parlage*—they were told that a strong Government was all they wanted, and they voted for it—they were discontented with King Log, and they have got King Stork. Even 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 *gobemouches* will make this discovery at last. The sheep of Panurgus, they follow the lead wherever that happens to take them; or rather the "*Gri-*

*bouilles*" of politics, they jump into the river to get out of the rain. They were told, for their own purposes, by those who did not believe one word of it, that 1852 was to be a year of Socialism, pillage, and murder; and rather than exert the slightest moral courage, and elect, as they might have done, any one they pleased, they have plunged headforemost into the arms of despotism, and sold themselves without the quittance of a bond or the paltry earnest of a bribe. Those Orleanist and Legitimist journals which venture to say anything at all, tell them that this is escaping the crisis of 1852, and they are the consummate fools to credit such poltroonery and humbug.

On the 2nd of December, France passed under the yoke, and was hemmed in a bloody dilemma. Behind, were a military revolution and a massacre,—above and around her was martial law,—and in front, a black horizon of civil strife and anarchy. The question put to her was "Yes" or "No?" She had the option only of a brutal despotism or of an Iliad of confusion. The *plébiscite* was—A bad Government or none?—Louis Napoleon or the Deluge? We may conceive the answer.

Whatever the confidence of Europe in the vote, there is a simple way of testing Louis Napoleon's. If the suffrages of Frenchmen have really elected him, he needs nothing more. Let him throw himself upon the nation—annul the state of siege, which makes the capital a barrack, and the half of France a camp—reduce the army—give their muskets back to the National Guard—unmuzzle the press—restore the jury—stop delations, proscriptions, deportations. The man of the people cannot fear the people. But he makes no sign. I understand him. He parades the votes, but he trusts the sabre. He is right. He knows that the votes are a lie, the sabre only a reality. There are those who think that he will grant the press

a regulated liberty. He cannot. His seizure and his tenure of power have been such, that the freedom of the press, however faint, must ultimately mine or storm it.

Louis Napoleon's forte is parody. His imitations of his uncle are admirable in their way, but open to the charge of sameness. John Reeve hit off Kean's "Richard" to the life, but contrived to infuse into it enough burlesque to amuse the pit and gallery. Even this species of entertainment requires a dash of novelty. The best of comedies, particularly a revival, cannot be expected to run for ever. A little variety in the *mise en scène* heightens the interest and assists the "take" of the performance. Let Louis Napoleon attempt the part of the "Citizen King," after the once "glorious" days of July; let him don the white hat, assume the cotton umbrella, and stroll along that Boulevard where he won his spurs. But why, in the midst of an adoring people, 1,200 men to guard the Elysée? Why these cocked pistols that precede him in his promenade? Why that close carriage with its ball-proof panels? Why that surrounding mob of Cuirassiers? Why that furious pace? The Government proclaims that it is embarrassed by the enthusiasm of the nation and overwhelmed with popularity. This dread of the assassin is a singular gloss upon that flattering text. And where will those precautions stop? The populace is driven back by soldiers, but can those soldiers be themselves relied on? Malicious, probably lying rumour says already, No. Out of those 16,000 muskets which are acknowledged to be hostile, are there none which in a *feu de joie*, or a review, may not be pointed by a desperate fanatic against the breast of an usurper? Before the *coup d'état*, the order of the day was "*Suivez-moi.*" Whoever should attempt that now, would find the proceeding both difficult and dangerous. He must force his way through janitors and guards,

and seek the Elect of seven millions, the Autocrat of France, in some stern seclusion, dreading, perhaps, like Cromwell in his latter days, the assassin in each approaching step, and skulking each night into some new bedchamber.

France is now making, at her own expense, and for the information of the world, a vast experiment. She is endeavouring to reverse the course of time, to defy the laws of nature, and to go back half a century. She fell asleep, like Rip Van Winkle, in 1804, and she awakes in the same spot in 1852. She has for 60 years taken every opportunity of asserting her preeminence in arts, civilization, and intelligence; and she is now exhibiting a servile imitation of the Republic of Hayti. The *Charivari* congratulated itself a few months back that Soulouque had rendered all future emperors impossible. Soulouque II. lives and reigns. Christendom had imagined that the progress of humanity had assured the victory of reason over force, of enlightenment over superstition, of morality over the baser vices, and of justice over the fouler crimes. The success of this revolution would establish just the contrary.

Let those who will, assert that the monstrous attempt is right; let those who can, suppose that it will prove triumphant. I shall believe it when I see the brute assume dominion over man, and the Powers of Hell prevail against the God of Heaven. And when the hour comes, as come it will, that France shall cease to writhe under a grotesque tyranny, and acquire a Government that is neither an incubus nor solecism, she will remember that the voice which has been the heartiest, the promptest, and the boldest to denounce her oppression and oppressors, has been that of "Perfidious Albion."



## LETTER III.\*

## THE NATIONAL DEFENCES.

It is generally admitted now, that the chances of aggression from the Government of France—for her people have no longer a voice in the matter—have fearfully increased since the 2nd of December. Some think the danger more imminent than others; few dispute it.

Louis Napoleon won and holds despotic power by the army. The *coup d'état* was as much a prætorian one as when Julian bought the empire of Rome at public auction, and was raised on the shields of the legions who sold it him. Louis Napoleon's election was a sham; his Constitution is a farce; he reigns so long as the army pleases, and not one instant longer. His uncle was the army's master, he is the army's slave. He bought it with money, he holds it by bribes, and he can only continue to retain it by pandering to its wants, its instincts, and its passions. Those wants are promotion; those passions are war.

Each day augments his insulation, and he withdraws more and more within the narrowing circle of a desperate *entourage*. The servile who salaam to him “adhere” not to his fortunes, but their own. He knows that, and whilst he uses he distrusts them.

\* *Times*, January 24, 1852.

Those who give the tone to society recede, and the dread of the spy and the gendarme closes even the *salons*. Legitimist sentiment and Republican principle seek the covert of the strictest privacy, and the suspension even of ordinary intercourse tells unmistakably on trade. The nation crouches beneath the sabre, and the gagging of the press completes its slavery because it insures its ignorance. The air is thick with delation, each man shuns his neighbour, and the stillness of suspicion and of terror is appalling. It is like that suffocating atmosphere which precedes in the tropics the fury of the hurricane. War has its perils for such a Government, but peace is more perilous still.

The bait to the army, the sop to the people, would be the frontier of the Rhine, and Louis Napoleon has intimated more than once that *that* is a portion of his mission. Next to the Rhine, the most flattering bribe to military vanity would be the humiliation of perfidious Albion. Vengeance, ambition, safety, and cupidity would be all satisfied by that.

Despotism draws its narrowing cordons round constitutional government. The outworks of our parliamentary system were in Republican France. We would not see that. They have been stormed. The breaching battery is now pointed against us.

The resources of a nation are wielded unconditionally by one man. His will is law—his resolves are secret—his operations are hidden by the silence of the press—his duplicity is consummate—his perfidy is history—his patience of contrivance vast—his audacity of execution infinite. His ports and arsenals are in efficient keeping—his navy is the best appointed France has ever had—his army is the finest in the world—and the sea, that separates all from us, is *abridged*, if it is not “bridged,” by steam. Straws in the air show the currents in it. Orders have been

sent to Brest and Toulon to quicken the armament of vessels ; soldiers on furlough are commanded to rejoin their regiments instantly ; and the organisation of their hospitals, clothing, and provisions has been placed on the war footing. In Belgium the Jesuits are plotting and preaching annexation to France. Their journals, edited by Frenchmen, are displaying an effrontery of treason paralleled only by that of the *Constitutionnel* and *Patrie* before the *coup d'état* ; and priests and acolytes are chanting in full choir the old Claudian litany of despotism :—

“Nunquam libertas gratior exstat  
“Quam sub rege pio.”

Now turn to England.

The Cabinet is an infirmary—a ward for decayed statesmen and valetudinary Whigs. The designation of “the happy family,” by which they are popularly known, is most *unhappy*. The real “happy family” consists of the most incongruous creatures—of the cat and the rat, the owl and the mouse, the hawk and the linnet, of animals that prey and that are preyed upon. The Ministers resemble them in one point only—their excessive tameness. A more fortunate comparison would have been to one of those brass bands which form the glory of Vauxhall and of the minor theatres. Some six or eight gentlemen, of various ages, heights, and sizes, with the same name, the same features, and the same cut, play upon the same wind instrument. The effect, though singular, is certainly monotonous. The family “tie” is too conspicuous. In the Cabinet, the “virtues” of the Greys and Elliots are relieved only by those of the Elliots and the Greys ; and on the casual introduction of a new member, curiosity is piqued, and is sure to be rewarded by the ultimate discovery of a relationship. The Ministry has

been breeding in and in, with the natural and inevitable result—political cretinism, scrofula, and rickets.

The Premier, the Cadmus of the crew, its inventor of letters, Brobdignag in words and Lilliput in acts, has scrupulously followed Fox's advice, "never to do to-day what, by any possibility, can be put off till to-morrow." By this admirable method of conducting business, the political capital transferred to his account by Sir Robert Peel is dwindling to an algebraic quantity, and now, *in articulo mortis*, he is setting to work in earnest. His nightly and his weekly organs affect a pride in his weakly state, and boast that if the Ministry is small in men, it will be great in measures. The surprise will give a zest to the performance, but that experience which makes fools wise is not calculated to render *us* sanguine. A batch of tailors, whose professional life has consisted in sitting crossed-legged upon a board, *may*, at a short notice, do the work of "navvies." The exploit, however, is too improbable to tempt any rational contractor to apply to them. Lord John Russell's merit has hitherto been to do exceedingly little himself, but to leave a very great deal to be done by those who happen to follow him.

The Colonial Office has succeeded to a miracle in giving *dissatisfaction* to the colonies. Pillage and murder in New Zealand, discontent in Australia, a *quasi* rebellion at the Cape, and the *pièce de résistance* of a Caffre war, are seductive items in its bill of fare. The Administration has disabused the mother country of the mischievous delusion, that colonies should be a source of pride and strength to her; and she finds that their real object and utility are to offer a prize to thieves and burglars—an infinity of snug berths to the *enfants perdus* of the Ministry and aristocracy—a means of employing fleets and armies, which might otherwise be disbanded, or turned to some advantage—

and to demonstrate to ourselves and Europe, that soldiers who cost more than any others in the world, are excellent targets, but miserable shots. Ministerial agents, emigration societies, and even Australian diggings themselves, struggle in vain to allure the emigrants who flock like autumnal birds of passage from the shores of Ireland and England. They shun the colonial coasts, and fly to the United States. Journalists and legislators, aghast at the phenomenon, affect not to comprehend it. The truth, which is in the breasts of all, rises to the lips of none. A man in America is really a man, and, even though he carry a hod upon his shoulders, the political equal of the President; in the colonies he is the associate of felons, and has been little better than a slave.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has never yet reached to the height of a budget. The one that is annually consummated is invariably a sort of epic, with beginning, middle, and end,—the work of different hands and ages. That it should still be called the Chancellor's, displays the credulity that assigns the *Odyssey* to Homer, without the excuse of tradition and obscurity. The embarrassment of the Minister in the disposal of a surplus, which his own genius would never have procured, is now happily relieved. The Colonial Secretary has effectually disbursed it in the charming divertissement of Caffre triumphs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a riddle. The most popular and efficient member of the Cabinet—the bugbear of Continental despotisms, the *enfant terrible* of the Peace Society, the trust and mistrust of advanced Liberals, the Coryphæus of diplomacy, and the prince of protocols—was suddenly seized with a fit of vertigo, and, forgetting the professions, acts, and convictions of his last ten years, avowed, or is said to have avowed, his admiration of the perjury, treason, and liberticide of Bonaparte. The

Gods surely smote him with judicial blindness, for all attempts to enlist for him the public sympathy have proved abortive in presence of the damning fact, that he applauded an execrable tyranny. He has given the lie to his latter life, and the individual Palmerston is cut in two. He has crucified his reputation on the horns of this dilemma: either he mistook the real nature of the *coup d'état*, and in that case he was a dupe; or, knowing it, he sanctioned it, and then he was clearly an apostate. Of his successor I can yet say little. He is a young nobleman "of great promise," but, diplomatically, of no performance,—an industrious Vice-President of the Board of Trade—an affable Manager of the Exhibition—the guest of the Hôtel de Ville—the speaker of a neat French speech, with an equally neat French accent. His peculiar qualification for Foreign Affairs would seem to resemble that of the late Mr. Courtenay for the Board of Trade. When that gentleman assumed the Presidency, he announced, as a proof of his freedom from prejudice, that, in all that concerned his department, "his mind was a sheet of blank paper." It may therefore be presumed that the statesman, like the poet, "*nascitur non fit*." Yet, with Europe out of joint, it may, perhaps, be questionable if inexperience, however estimable, should rule our external relations.

The Admiralty, whose independent Lords are presided by an independent layman, have shown that they can neither build a ship nor victual her. It remains to be seen if they can fight or man her. They constructed a fleet of iron steamers, and then ascertained, by practice at a target, that iron was unfit to sustain a cannon-shot. This remarkable application of the analytical philosophy was succeeded by as remarkable an application of the synthetical. Builders and engine-makers were kept in happy ignorance of each other's operations, and the engine and

the hull, which they severally produced, though excellent apart, would not work together. The idea was ingenious, but not original. It was borrowed from the Laputan tailors, who cut their coats upon abstract principles, but never succeeded in a fit.

The "Horse Guards" has been asleep since 1815, and has only awoke once every June, to assist at the Waterloo banquet. It has outdone Alexander, for only

"Thrice *he* routed all his foes,  
And thrice *he* slew the slain;"

while *it* has performed that capital operation six-and-thirty times. It is but justice to admit that, during this protracted somnolency of the authorities, the contractors and the jobbers have been wide awake.

When we quit the Ministry, and regard the nation, we find it oscillating from presumptuous confidence to absurd or affected panic.

The temerity that invites danger is often the first to run away from it. Arrogance is neither courage nor safety. The Master of France is not likely to be cowed by chorusses of "Rule Britannia," or gasconades about the "British Lion." The British Lion! His seedy representative may be seen in the van of some itinerant menagerie, with a hog mane, rat tail, bandy legs, and clawless paws, the strumous result of official doctoring and cribbing. England is to be protected by deeds, not words—by arms, and not opinions. Her security does not consist in boasting that she is secure, but in the force that makes her so.

Her real defence is in the waters that surround her, not in camps or bastions. Let her assert her "regality of the narrow seas," and defy the world. The mode of opposing a French

army landed is a subsidiary consideration; the dominant one is to prevent the landing. Our present condition has been compared to what obtained in the days of Harold. But where was Harold's fleet? The Normans had the vessels, not the Saxons. And where is our fleet? If we look for it in the Downs, we must reply with Tilburina:—

"The *Channel* fleet we cannot see,  
Because ~~it~~ not in sight."

It is everywhere but where it ought to be; rotting in the Tagus, sustaining Dona Maria da Gloria, and making insolent "demonstrations" against the people of Portugal,—protecting Malta and Gibraltar,—collecting dues and jeopardizing the American alliance for a savage whose title is a joke—blockading, against our own commerce, some hundred leagues of the Bight of Benin—prosecuting an evangelical crusade in favour of the black man, and callously consigning to the graves and the sharks of Sierra Leone innumerable corpses of our countrymen—bullying Brazil—frittering our strength, and squandering our resources everywhere.

We pay for this navy more than 6,000,000*l.* yearly. The least we can ask is to have it when we want it. I suggested in the first letter that I wrote, "an imposing maritime force in the Channel;"—the common sense of the people of England demands that imperatively now. Let the Ministry look to it. If there is danger, that is the step to be taken; and if it be not taken, the Ministry deserves impeachment. If there is no danger, why talk of armaments?

The right disposition of the naval force is the true defence of the coast. The grass-grown fortifications of Boulogne and our own crumbling martello towers demonstrate the lunacy of pro-



viding for a passing object by a permanent and frightful outlay. Even were we fools enough to sink our millions in towers and entrenchments, camps and batteries, we have not the troops to man them now, still less to garrison them afterwards. The railway and electric telegraph explode these costly imbecilities. What we require is a moderate force, so organised that it can be quickly thrown upon a given point, or upon several. We are ignorant where a descent would be effected—assuredly it would *not* be on our camp—and the idea of fortifying the whole seaboard would be insanity.

The panic of the country is either unmanly or it is admirably acted. The morning papers teem with imminent invasions and invaders. Like Falstaff's men in buckram, they grow upon us in the counting. A short time ago there appeared an intimation that 5,000 troops must be raised immediately; a few days afterwards they had swelled to 10,000; the last news expanded the gathering host to 10,000 militia and 25,000 regulars; by this time the numbers may be 50,000. Projects for repelling midnight assaults start like mushrooms out of rotten dung. "Naval officers" modestly began with nocturnal razzias of 5,000 Frenchmen. As they were far too easily disposed of, the next hypothesis involved an *impromptu* descent of 40,000, all lying *perdus* upon the coast of France, and embarked, transported, and deposited in England under the cover of one dark night. That was alarming, but I perceive, with a new horror, that the very last estimate of what we shall need is founded on the calculation of 150,000 invaders. If we proceed at this rate, we shall soon have to provide against the landing of the whole French nation.

Our troops should be efficient, supplied with the best arms, and taught to use them. Rifles and revolvers will play a great part in future war. Our men have neither, and might as well

engage with slings and arquebuses as with their Brummagem muskets. Our method of drill makes lay figures of them—our army tailors decorate them with bulls' eyes, cripple their limbs, and dress them in the livery of Byzantine mercenaries or of royal footmen; and our system of purchase may furnish us with men of fortune, if it has not previously provided blacklegs—may make the officer a gentleman, but cannot render him a soldier.

Before we are saddled with fresh levies, we have a right to insist that the millions we expend, and the force we possess, should be made the most of. They come with a bad grace to the nation for more money, who lavish what the nation gives. Patronage and nepotism suck up the navy and the army estimates; our administrative boards are exhibiting on all sides the disgraceful spectacle of incapacity above, jobbery below, extravagance everywhere; and we are bitterly reminded of Chancellor Oxenstiern's admonition to his son, "Go forth into the world and see with how little wisdom it is governed."

We copy, in our own small way, the capital mistake of Constantine, which proved the ruin of the Eastern Empire. Our Guards and Line represent closely his Palatines and Borderers. The hateful distinction of duties, equipments, privilege, and pay are the same in either case; the dissatisfaction is alike; and only the subordination of the military element in England renders the result different. But Guards or Line should be available at once to meet an enemy, and the police and pensioners might be drilled to perform their routine duties.

Volunteer troops are a part of our system; in the last war they were a large one. The actual yeomanry is rather a set off to the lord-lieutenant of the county, an electioneering influence, and a means of attending drawing-rooms in regimentals, than a genuine force. The rifle companies which are proposed would,

under judicious regulations, be most valuable. The history of America shows what can be done by men who step forward to defend their country, with a stout heart, a keen eye, and a good rifle.

Jobbers, patronage-mongers, and promotion-hunters cry night and day for money and troops. The Ministry lived on the Exhibition last year—do they purpose this year to exist on panic? Let the nation beware. There is an ocean of expenditure before it. What is beggaring Austria, hampering Prussia, and enslaving and destroying France, but an overgrown military force? The anile organ of Protectionists and Tories informs us that they are prepared for all contingencies. Their *quondam* leader, the Sidonian author of *Coningsby*, developes in that Caucasian work his conception of a model Government—an absolute Monarchy controlled by a free press! How the press is to assert its freedom, he does not think it necessary to explain, and probably he intends to preserve the secret until he can put the idea in practice. However profound the theory may be, the spectacle of France is not calculated to enchant us with the working of it. The “Six Acts” and Peterloo are not so remote as 1804. Our musketry, however contemptible to Caffres, may be formidable to Liberals and Free-traders. A large increase of the standing army has its perils, even for us. The sea is our natural field of battle—our ships are our fortresses—our sailors are our hosts—and our good broadsides, if rightly served, will consign to the lowest depths of the ocean the fleets and the troops, the hopes and the boasts, of any insolent invader.

Let our ships be at once disposed where they should be, and I more than doubt if those invaders will appear. But there is another question: Is England to look on with folded arms at a new partition of Europe? Is Savoy to be annexed, or is Belgium

to become a province of France, and the Rhine her boundary? Men whom I respect say, or seem to say, that *that* is no concern of ours. The treaty of 1815 is waste paper; each party has broken it in turn; and Cracow, Hungary, Italy, and Germany have found it an insulting mockery. Granted. What then? There is a law antecedent to all treaties, and above them—the law of self-preservation. It is England's right and duty to maintain her independence, her high place among the nations,—the legacy our fathers left, the heritage we owe our sons. I am yet to be convinced that policy and prudence, or even mere economy, counsel us to remain passive, and to wait till despotism has closed its ranks, mustered its forces, intrenched its camp, and organised its blockade against our commerce and our principles, its razzias against our coasts. This is not, I apprehend, so self-evident a proposition as to warrant dogmatism and silence doubt. However that may be, war, if unhappily it comes, must not be conducted like the last. No subsidies to nations to fight their own battles—to Princes to cajole and betray their subjects—to “peoples” to accept our money and our blood, and to spit in our faces afterwards. No deadly and disastrous expeditions to the Scheldt; no Peninsula campaigns; no new hundred millions added to the debt. For us the war must be a naval war. Nor are we merely to patrol our own coasts, but to scour our enemy's—to shut up his ports, to sweep every vessel from the waters, to cut off Algeria, and to hermetically seal his foreign trade. How long would Louis Napoleon reign in such disaster and disgrace? He promises France peace—and he would give her war; plenty—and her cornucopia would teem only with taxation; trade—and her finance would be insolvency; commerce—and Marseilles and Havre would be starved; glory—and her shores would be insulted; the boundary of the Rhine—and Algeria would be

lost. How long would it be until there arose that sinister cry which has reached him once already—“*A bas le tyran*”? For the contest would not be what the former in its outset was—despotism and England against liberty; but England and self-government against despotism. The faction and the arms of Bonaparte would be opposed to us, but with us would be the intelligence of Frenchmen, their Constitutional sympathies, their Republican convictions. Liberty would be our flag—Tyranny his; and who can doubt the issue?

And when the fiends who ride the whirlwind, for the fell purposes of selfish aggrandisement and of human butchery, are driven to the hell of conscience and of infamy out of which such passions come—when the clouds are scattered, and the heavens are clear, and the sun of justice, peace, and freedom lights the earth again—it will disclose the *people* of England and of France exchanging, as before, the grasp of mutual friendship and esteem, and battling only in the generous contest for preeminence in arts, intelligence, and progress.\*

\* Since this Letter was published, the spring-tide of Australian emigration has set in—the Whig Ministry has fallen on its own sword—the Derby Cabinet protects Protection, as the Otaheitan son proved filial piety, by eating his father to prevent his death—and the generous inexperience of one Foreign Secretary has contrasted favourably with the ignominious fainéantism of another. Let us be just. In the days of Palmerston, the passport of the Foreign Office and the name of Englishman were a guarantee *from* insult—now they appear to be a warrant *for* it. In Lord Palmerston's keeping, the honour of the country was unchallenged and secure; and in the hour of danger, mindful only of his courage and his services, she will again summon to his post and to her counsels the old and brave diplomatist.

## LETTER IV.

## THE IMPERIAL SYSTEM AND THE BRITISH "STATESMEN."\*

THE Government of M. Bonaparte marches in its ominous and appointed track. Before him is the gulf of financial confusion, looming discontent, military pronunciamientos, or inevitable war; vengeance and cupidity whisper in his ear the fatal counsel, "Dare!" and behind, necessity, the Fury of crime, goads him implacably on.

France only could comprise in two short months the same amount of history;—the *coup d'état*—the mockery of an election—the greater mockery of a Constitution—the Parisian massacre—the military hunts of rural Republicans—confiscations at pleasure—proscriptions *en masse*—deportations to Cayenne on a scale that would consume half the navy of the State—gaol deliveries by retail—gaol overflows by wholesale—half-a-million of French bayonets levelled against France—a million of spies smuggled into every public place and every private dwelling—a press without a pen—a Parliament without a tongue—Ministers set up merely to be knocked down—a chaos of violence, fears, and doubts dancing past the eye of the giddy spectator like the strange figures of the magic lantern, and leaving on the retina a muddy spectrum of the grotesque and hideous.

\* *Times*, February 21, 1852.

France is the laboratory for experiments on abstract theories of government. In 1792, she took the fearful leap from an absolute monarchy to an absolute democracy. This was meant to be the incarnation of the purest reason and of philosophic virtue. Its immediate results were the Reign of Terror; its remote, the usurpation of a military adventurer. That usurpation represented "glory;"—it brought the Cossacks to Paris; left after it the bloody legacy of centralization and of hero-worship, and consumed itself, Prometheus-like, a captive on a rock. The Restoration began warily with Louis XVIII., but asserted its principle of "the right divine," in the person of Charles X. That principle was half a century too late; and legitimacy was driven out to die in exile. The "Citizen King" enthroned the idea of a monarchy, surrounded by republican institutions; the two elements of the system and terms of the proposition struggled from the first for mastery, and in 1848 Louis Philippe and elective sovereignty fled to England together. The Republic and universal suffrage were proclaimed by Republicans, and acclaimed by Royalists; universal suffrage, false to itself, intrusted its powers to men who destroyed it; and the world looked on at the extravaganza of a Republic administered by an Imperial Executive, and ruled by a Monarchical Legislature. The Imperial ingredient has contrived, for the moment, to prevail, and its mystical formula is a democratic military despotism. No political chymistry, no human art, can make these components combine or work. They are oil and vinegar, fire and water, things that are incongruous or mutually destructive. Such democracy, if democracy wins, is Communism; such military predominance is—War.

It is hard to unravel the tangled thread of caprice and obstinacy, passion and design, that has constituted the Bonapartist

policy since the 2nd of December. Consolidation of power at home, preparation for action abroad, have been its first necessities. There is much seeming vacillation, much real confusion, more subtle contrivance.

Bribery of some sort, direct or indirect, in earnest or in prospect, in money down or in bills upon the future, is its cardinal principle. To the Jesuits it offers the reversion of primary instruction, the University, the gagging of the press, the law of the Sabbath and saints' days, the genuflexions of the soldiers, and its own grimaces. To the workmen it gives wages for new public works, new streets, new railways, and new beds of rivers. To jobbers it presents monopolies of wheat, dear bread, dear sugar, and the "*exploitation*" of markets and of men. To the bar and the bench, to counsellors and judges, to ministers and plenipotentiaries, it decrees augmented salaries. The upholsterers it coaxes by refurnishing the Tuileries; the tailors by new liveries for legislators, councillors, senators, and lackeys; the shopkeepers by profusion and by evening parties. To the army it rains crosses, promotions, donatives. The nation it assiduously indoctrinates with the belief that this hypocrisy, corruption, and extravagance are "family, property, religion, stability, and order."

The bulk of the cash is devoted to the church, the army, and the populace. This triangular distribution of the Orleans spoil discloses the condition of existence of the Government. But the funds that go to those insatiate maws cannot be also abstracted from them. Some bodies in the State must furnish them, and those bodies are the upper and the middle classes. His Jesuit friends have suggested, no doubt, to Louis Napoleon the instrument which formed the pride and glory of the Holy Office. The impenitent Protestant was laid supine between two massive



plates of iron, the upper of which descended with all the power of the screw upon his flattened frame. The *bourgeoisie* of France is in that precise position. The mob is under and the army over it, and the screw above will adjust, to the nicest shade of endurance, the financial pressure on its chest. The world is yet to learn the exact nature of that method of taxation, which is to squeeze from one portion of the nation the purchase-money of the rest.

Universal ignorance holds the next place in the Imperial system to universal bribery. The censorship has been carried beyond the limits of the ludicrous, for the censors themselves are censured; the freedom of the press is dead and buried; the *feuilletons* are castrated; the Opera is held to be a sacred mystery; not even an independent silence is permitted; and the contortions of such journals as the *Siècle* and *Débats*, while retailing what they know to be false, are equally pathetic and absurd. The *rédaction* of the Government organs, the *Constitutionnel* and *Patrie*, is carefully modelled on the recipe of Swift,—they never tell the truth but with the intent that you should take it for a lie, nor a lie but in the hope that you should take it for the truth; the deadliest mark you can receive of their sincerity is a promise, especially if it is confirmed with an oath, after which every prudent man retires and makes up his mind for the worst. The *Constitutionnel*, at this particular moment, takes infinite pains to dissuade Great Britain from any defensive preparations. It is astonished at our simplicity, puzzled at our apprehensions, and greatly amused at our expense. Dr. Véron is immortal in the Pâte Regnault, and his “solutions,” political and pharmaceutical, are admirable; but we should, perhaps, esteem his advice more highly, and be more tickled with his drollery, if we did not recollect that, on the 2nd of

December, the *Constitutionnel* appeared with a leading article ridiculing the idea, and demonstrating the impossibility of a *coup d'état*, three hours after it was struck.

The ignorance which is considered so salutary for the nation, is not looked on as equally beneficial to the Government. The Empire would be nothing without a Police Minister, and M. de Maupas is the Fouché of the day. We are informed in the Presidential letter which defines and consecrates the important office, that its organization is perfectly paternal. It is constructed altogether for the advantage of the subject, and in order to convey to the Chief of the State the wants and wishes of his attached constituents. The gist of the system is to make every man distrust his neighbour, and every official a spy upon the rest. Providence has always been a favourite figure with M. Bonaparte. As "a second Providence" he solicited the donation; in the shape of "Providence," according to the *Patrie*, he has robbed the house of Orleans; and the Ministry of Police assumes one of Providence's highest attributes—an acquaintance with the thoughts and acts of men. Like many other paternal offices, this is not quite to the taste of the child; and private, as well as public, individuals do not sufficiently appreciate the benefit of finding, that their dearest friend is salaried to sell them—that their charming partner in a polka is a spy—and their footman a remarkably intelligent detective.

Jesuitism, corruption, darkness, and espionage, are clinched by force. The numbers and the pay of the gendarmerie have been raised; and it is told that it is one of the pillars of the State. The army is caressed, of course. The "*élite*" of the nation has had dirty work to do, but it has been liberally paid for it. Rumours of its reduction have been industriously circulated. *Credat Judæus!* Every soldier is, and will be, wanted.

Reduce the army! Yes, when, like Sylla, Louis Napoleon abdicates, and walks home to his lodgings, pursued by the curses of the crowd and the *morbis pediculosus*.

Is that army to be counted on? The event must answer. There are some facts, and there are more surmises. For months before the *coup d'état*, Bonapartist regiments were drawn to Paris, and were kept there. They composed the Prætorians of the 2nd of December. The troops whose Imperialism appeared doubtful were draughted off to Algeria. In the Presidential election these troops were either mute or hostile, and the force in Rome was, at the best, but lukewarm. There are two camps, the Algerian and Prætorian; they may not have actually two flags, but they have two distinct sympathies. It is generally believed that, in the line, the later recruits and the sub-officers are more or less republican. The upper grades of the military hierarchy have a strong taint of Orleanism. How could it be otherwise? Those grades were won under the monarchy of Louis Philippe, and the command of his sons. It cannot be supposed that the exile of their best and bravest generals has excited no sympathy, and raised no murmur, amongst their old companions; nor is it possible that soldiers, however passive under discipline, or callous to the ordinary feelings of our nature, could become, without some disgust and discontent, the executioners and bloodhounds of their countrymen. It has been said that the confiscation of the Orleans property has been ill received by that very military which it was meant to buy.

Whatever the opinions of the army and the navy, their franchise has been cut in pieces. By the new elective law, men can only vote if present in the commune for which they were inscribed, and the Government has merely to shift their quarters to destroy their suffrage. What a world of suspicion, if not of.

rage, this one provision indicates! The vote of the soldier and the sailor has now ceased to be a right, and has become a favour—it may be given if affirmative, it is nullified if doubtful,—and is nothing but a part in that melancholy farce to which an election in France has been reduced. It is reported that even the Parisian regiments have muttered discontent.

Gulliver informs us that, among the herds of the Yahoos, the leader is generally the most deformed in body and the most depraved in mind; that he selects as his associate whoever can be found most like himself, and that he keeps him until he can procure a worse. It would be rash to speculate on the final Ministers of France. Through successive decrements of official character and personal respectability, the President has arrived at M. de Persigny. But even M. de Persigny himself displays a migratory versatility. He is to-day the Minister of the Interior, he is to-morrow to be something else. Whatever we may think of the "happy family" upon this side of the Channel, the Cabinet of M. Bonaparte is not an example of the same "virtues" or the same softness. All its members appear to be similarly electrified, and to repel each other. M. de Persigny quarrels with M. de Morny—both are sworn foes to M. de Maupas; General St. Arnaud has a real or pretended feud with the President; the President is discontented with the Minister of Finance; and the official labours of another Minister are disturbed by two reputed wives and a slanderous charge of bigamy. *Divide et impera* is Louis Napoleon's system, and his Cabinet affords an inimitable specimen of the manner in which it works.

The clemency of the new Augustus has lately been the theme of the French and English hired press. I dispute alike the sentiment and fact. The prisons could no longer hold the prisoners—forts, casemates, hulks, were gorged to suffocation—hamlets

were stripped of their male inhabitants—the fields were untilled for the spring sowing—the olives rotted on the trees—the curses of the peasants, the indignation of proprietors, and the remonstrances of priests, grew too loud to be stifled—and the Treasury itself began to groan under the burdens thrown upon it. The “misguided” and necessary labourers were set at liberty; but farmers, journalists, shopkeepers, physicians, were retained; and arrests of the suspected continue to substitute intelligence for ignorance, property for poverty, the *bourgeois* for the *prolétaire*, among the tenants of the dungeons. The courts-martial are cashiered, because open trials disclosed the scandalous excesses of the Government, and the infamous falsehoods of the charges of robbery, murder, and *jacquerie* heaped upon men whose crime was defending the Constitution of their country. The Court of Cassation quashed their sentences, but no journal was suffered to print its judgment. M. Bonaparte has now decreed a triumvirate, consisting of a military chief, a procureur-general, and prefect, to decide, without a trial and without appeal, the fate of its miserable victims. The deportations to Cayenne have been partially commuted to Algierine or to European banishment. The colony could not contain, the ships could not convey, the convicts. There are reasons for keeping those ships at home.

The domestic policy of M. Bonaparte may be thus summed up:—Suppression of inconvenient truth—diffusion of convenient falsehood—confiscation of Republican and Orleanist property—proscription and exile of intelligence—violence in the Departments—espionage and delation everywhere—the army and the workmen alternately cajoled, bribed, bullied, and defrauded—the higher and the middle classes menaced, flattered, and suspected—martial law general—justice nowhere—the jury suppressed—

the courts disregarded—the funds kept up—trade gone down—commerce paralysed—finance the road to ruin—tyranny made more tyrannous by the forms of a mock liberty—clerks for Ministers—parasites for Senators—tools and dummies for Councillors of State—nominees for legislators—defiance of opinion—and distrust of every man and thing, even of the force by which the system lives.

Two months of power have brought real weakness. Louis Napoleon has gained nothing, and has lost much. Each party has been fished for, none has been caught. The bait is too coarse, and the hook too plain for the simplest political gudgeon. The Republicans perceived that the name of the Republic was an *alias* for the Empire, that universal suffrage was an universal sham, and the vote by ballot an instrument of torture. The Legitimists were coaxed with the reversion of the Government for Henri V.—a bill which no Apella of the right divine could be got to discount; their titles were restored, a new patent of nobility scornfully accepted by the heirs of the historic names of France; and the spoliation of the House of Orleans only affronted their sagacity and honour, for the Legitimists are loyal gentlemen, and neither burglars nor receivers. Menace and cajolery have been tried in vain by a power which they regard with detestation and contempt. They ridicule it in their *salons*, they rail at it to strangers, and they bide their time. The Orleanists were tempted with trade for the shopkeepers, orders for the manufacturers, concessions for the capitalists, their new escutcheons for the new nobles, their old plunder for the old jobbers, vengeance on the Republicans, security against the Socialists, and that fool's paradise of bloated Plutocrats, that *tertium quid* of Jesuitism and the bayonet, which tyrants christen stability and order. Some were caught, more wavered, and, perhaps, a few intrigued, when

impatience and suspicion struck the blow, and the lists of the proscription and the robbery of the Princes were a declaration of war to the knife between the Orleanists and Bonaparte. Strong in the navy, influential in the army, they cannot cease to be formidable; and they may hope in vain from the hands of Napoleon a patrimony which might feed a *pronunciamento*. The Socialists were lured with *Idées Napoléoniennes* and the advent of the Messiah of Socialism. Their chiefs were hunted like savage beasts, imprisoned, shot, transported; their fraternal associations were dissolved; their trees of liberty and their republican device were felled or chiselled out; but the Orleanist plunder has been thrown to them, Bonapartist emissaries wheedle them, and from day to day they live in the hope of *octrois* abolished, wine duties remitted, and taxation saddled on the rich. Not all the arts of the most reckless despotism will make the *ouvriers* willing slaves or lasting tools. Disgust at the reaction of the Legislative Assembly, repeated disappointments, and material sufferings, indispose them to resistance, and they watch in sullen silence a Government which they distrust or internally abhor, but whose necessities they know must make it lean to them.

There is a party in France, and in England too, who are for trade at all price. They value freedom, not for itself, but only for what it will bring. The till is the magnetic North to which, without deflection, their wishes and their votes inevitably point. "Order" is their Pisgah—"order," which shall let them buy and sell, and job and gamble; which shall keep the thief from their strong box, the press from their lotteries of the golden ingots and contracts for stinking meats; which shall shut out the noise of Parliamentary discussion, and the dread of popular progress, and shall suffer them to devote themselves body and soul to the

ledger, the counter, or the Stock Exchange. This party hosannahed "the saviour of society," and the rise in the *rentes* and in the railway shares was the vote of confidence which capital passed, the "city" endorsed, and Palmerston applauded. That noble lord protested that a Government could not be bad under which the funds had risen. The Bourse and the Bank have discovered that checks drawn with the bayonet are hard to meet, and still harder to dishonour—the *agents de change* have been civilly told that if stocks go down, their numbers shall go up, and their monopoly shall cease—our brokers have taken to rifle clubs—and all find out, though somewhat late, that "order," of the true military pattern, is caprice for law, necessity for justice, "the hand and the will" of an autocrat for legislation, change for stability, and revolution for government. The defection of the moneyed interest is an ugly omen, for its instincts are as keen as those of Jesuitism. A system must be doomed when the Bourse recedes, base when Montalembert blushes, and tottering when Dupin resigns.

Such has been the system, such the success of M. Bonaparte at home—abroad his mission is to bully the weak and to cajole the strong.

In Piedmont, in Switzerland, and Belgium, the Jesuits have displayed an audacity which can only spring from concert, and from the assurance of support. The hopes of their order and the gold of France sustain them in their traitorous crusade. Bonapartist emissaries steal among the peasantry and soldiers, and trumpet the love of Napoleon for the poor, the glory and the gains he destines for the brave. Universal suffrage, the abolition of the *octrois*, the rights of labour, and the destruction of machinery, are whispered in the cottage and the *cabaret*. Corruption mounts to the military hierarchy and the legislative



bench, and Constitutional Monarchs and Swiss Republicans find the soil beneath them mined by treachery, the air foul with treason. The ambassadors of France prefer demand upon demand, cumulate menace upon menace. Yesterday the refugees were dangerous—they were driven to the interior or to England; to-day the press is insolent—its liberty is straightway violated; to-morrow Parliament will be denounced—its mouth will perforce be gagged. Each concession feeds the arrogance of tyranny, and impairs the resistance of its victim. The moment will arrive when even cowardice must affect courage, and despair attempt a stand. Perhaps it may be then too late. Belgium is already little better than a Bonapartist province. Leopold is allowed to reign till the humiliation of his Government, the defection of his functionaries, the purchase of his army, and the discontent of his subjects, have done the work of the invader. A decree and a commissary will effect the rest.

That man must be astute who can fathom the depths of Louis Napoleon's continental schemes. Alliances with and against Russia, Austria, Prussia—flattery of England, and invasion of her shores—Italian protectorates—adoration of the Pope, and his temporal deposition—the boundary of the Rhine—the partition of Switzerland—the seizure of Savoy—designs on Egypt—combinations, dislocations, fusions, and confusion, revolve like the shifting images of the kaleidoscope before the wild ambition of a Government, whose necessities drive it to plunge into action, no matter what or where.

M. Bonaparte was long enough in England to understand its aristocracy. To it he has appealed against the public and the press. His balls and dinners were deserted by the respectability of France, and the male and female notables of all parties shunned the scandals of the Elysée. But the "*élite*" of the English

visitors in Paris had no political or moral scruples, and 45 lords, ladies, and gentlemen graced the Presidential table. They regaled, they admired, they listened, they applauded, while the eloquent *Amphitryon* protested how peaceful his projects were, how calumnious the accusations of our newspapers. The people of France were informed by the next day's *Moniteur*, that the Chief of the State had feasted his senators and councillors ! An authentic list of those Conscript Fathers and Napoleonic dames might possibly have astonished, and would certainly have amused, both the Quartier St. Germain and the Faubourgs. A few days later, the same public was apprised that Louis Napoleon and our distinguished countrymen had enjoyed the hospitality of "Miss Howard." We are not informed if our countrywomen accompanied them there, and we may fairly hope, for their sakes and our own, that their curiosity and appetites were contented with the Elysée. M. Bonaparte, no doubt, concluded that he only anticipated by a little the Senatorial dignity of his British guests—a dignity which they would hasten to accept, when England became his transmarine possession. In the meantime he thinks, or affects to think, that they represent the feeling of their country. He is miserably mistaken. They represent nothing but oligarchic hatred of liberty and of the press, aristocratic noodledom, patrician flunkeyism, and "the base exception."

The Parliament of Britain opened, and Europe looked for a great solemnity on a great occasion. Parliamentary government, dead or dying throughout the Continent, had been brutally struck to the earth in France. This island was now the last sure refuge of freedom in the Old World, and the eyes of all were fixed upon the scene and on the actors. They expected something like the ancient drama; they witnessed nothing but a

contemptible burlesque. Peers and Commoners, Tories, Whigs, and Radical economists, forgot for once their enmities and their traditions, to abuse that press which had nobly defended representative institutions, public liberty, and the eternal principles of morality and truth. The Commons of England exhibited a profound indifference and disdain for any such abstractions, and reserved their enthusiasm and indignation for the cost and quality of "goes" of sherry, and the discount upon mutton chops. A war of opinion may be hanging over Europe, society may be heaving with the throes of strange theories struggling into action, but members have shown that a much more important subject with them is the smell that invades their right honourable noses, or the draught that assails their most venerable backs.

These "statesmen" have indicted the public press at the public bar. What are the counts?

It is "madness" to provoke Louis Napoleon, and at the same time to inform him that our shores are defenceless and our organization effete. Admiralty charts, Ordnance surveys, national statistics, and Blue-books are myths—there are no fishing-boats upon the sea—there are no pilots in the Channel. Frenchmen do not know, and never would, if writers in the papers did not tell them, that Dover Castle is not an Ehrenbreitstein, that Tilbury Fort is not impregnable, that Portsmouth has a beach, Pevensey a bay, Shoreham a bad harbour, and Folkestone a small jetty. And this poltroonery is addressed to "the British lion"—this balderdash to the grown-up intellect of Englishmen! There are various forms of "madness," but fatuity is the most incurable of all. It depends on softening of the brain, and defies the appliances and men of art.

The Colonial Secretary taunts the Press with uttering only the opinions of its writers. What! Is it *their* mission to preach,

like the Baptist in the wilderness? The popular nobleman who makes this charge represents a lucky accident and a happy family, and *they* sustain, against opinion, a system it condemns and an individual it dislikes. But the Press cannot live by cabal, intrigue, by backstairs influence, or domestic ties; it must speak the public voice, or it would soon be dumb; and its writers are powerful because they are the organs of its readers. Does Lord Grey dream of a law on signatures? Does he emulate the glory of M. Tinguay? But where is M. Tinguay now, and where are the Burgraves who planned the law and passed it? They have expiated their folly in cellular vans, in the prison Mazas, in damp and dismal countryhouses, in silence, obscurity, or exile. And where is the law itself? Even M. Bonaparte is said to be ashamed of it.

We are told that we jeopardize the amity of the French and English nations in vilifying the choice of France. Why, that is the whole question, and the assertion is a flagrant *petitio principii*. The press of England has not denounced the French *people*, but one who has surprised, gagged, manacled, and massacred it. Proof in hand, it has endeavoured to establish that, and every day confirms its judgment. The result will show if the sympathies of France are with the press of England or its peers, if genuine "statesmanship" and enduring "policy" consist in fawning on an ephemeral autocrat, or in championing a great and gallant nation.

The Earl of Derby feels assured of the pacific sentiments of M. Bonaparte. By what? By whom? Assertion is not argument—assurance is not proof. Lord John Russell is an absolute *Candide* of optimism. Perjury, treason, massacre, and spoliation have had their birth in the purest motives and the best intentions. Ah! hell is paved with good intentions; a

few of his Lordship's own are there; and he may find, perhaps, that these are its very choicest "flags" and most elaborate mosaic.

It might naturally be supposed that these party chiefs who exhibit such a touching confidence in M. Bonaparte, and so marvellous an unanimity in their Jeremiads of the press, would crown their pacific speeches with pacific acts. Not so. The mysteries of "statesmanship" exclude the vulgarities of logic and of common sense. "M. Bonaparte," says the Earl of Derby "is the soul of peace; but we had better arm." He, good man, would never dream of war, but he might be forced into it by others. By whom? By the Republicans? They are in dungeons. By the Orleanists? They are proscribed. By the Legitimists? They are prisoners in their *châteaux* and their *salons*. By the Socialists? They are hunted down. There remain only the army and Napoleonists, and they are the very parties that alarm the English press.

The Earl of Derby's "statesmanship" would be none the worse for a careful study of *Whateley's Logic* and the *Wealth of Nations*. Lord John Russell's homily on the Presidential virtues is capped with an equally superb *non sequitur*, and he who reproves us for awakening the susceptibilities of our peaceful friend, proposes to disarm them by the compliment of a hundred thousand militiamen.

Through all this mystification one of two things is clear—either there is at heart a sympathy with tyranny and profound distrust of freedom, or there is a base worship of expediency and consecration of the "accomplished fact." Whichever it be, it equally affronts the national character and the public conscience. England in the 19th century is not a mediæval Italian State; it is not, and it never has been, the land of Machiavelli and of

Borgia; it has ceased to be the country of Walpole and of Bolingbroke. These lessons of *ruserie* and falsehood are unworthy of the age and of the people. They are rank Materialism, and go straight to Atheism. Virtue and vice, in this ethical code, are convertible terms and conventional things. Down with morality and truth—they are for women and children; down with Christianity and natural religion—they are both a sham. Might is right—brute force is reason—and success is God.

## A CORRESPONDENCE WITH M. P.

THIS correspondence may amuse. Possibly it may instruct.

When, a few weeks after the *coup d'état*, the *pavé* of the Boulevard still stained with blood, and the best and noblest sons of France smitten in liberty or life, English noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies accepted the ostentatious hospitality of M. Bonaparte, and were paraded to Europe as his guests, they accomplished, *pro vice*, a political and censurable act. Paris murmured at it—England blushed. Under such circumstances, and at such a time, it was not and it could not be a private party, but a public scandal. Whatever his British guests may have intended, Louis Napoleon meant and made it a demonstration. I do not for a moment suppose they were accomplices—I am thoroughly satisfied that they were dupes.

But the gorgeous *salons* and lackeys of the Elysée, the melting viands, and the luscious wines were, after all, a mockery and lie. They were like the banquet of that Lydian king, who flouted the prescience of the Gods. The hashes and the joints were an infernal stew of human viscera and limbs. And whether our "countrymen" noticed it or not, the writing on the wall was *there*; for, over the head of M. Bonaparte himself, there glared in characters of blood, the sentence of his comrade Proudhon:—

“LA PROPRIÉTÉ! C’EST LE VOL!”

## I.

## THE FRENCH PRESIDENT AND HIS GUESTS.

*To the Editor of the Times.*

SIR,—I find in this morning's *Times* the following remarks, applied by your correspondent, "An Englishman," to those persons who dined with the French President on the 29th of January:—

"They regaled, they admired, they listened, they applauded, while the eloquent Amphitryon protested how peaceful his projects were," &c.

Also—

"They represent nothing but oligarchic hatred of liberty and of the press, aristocratic noodledom, patrician flunkeyism," &c.

I happened, Sir, to be one of the noodles on that occasion. The dinner took place at the Elysée, and not at the Tuileries. The whole of the guests were, I believe, personally known to the President during his residence in England. The Prince, I am told (for I did not hear him), remarked, after dinner, in private conversation, to Lord Hertford and to Lord Adolphus Fitz-Clarence, that he regretted the violent articles in the English papers, as he feared they might be productive of ill-feeling between the two countries. Not a syllable of politics was addressed to any other person present, nor was any speech or toast of any kind delivered or proposed. Your correspondent, however, might possibly give a political meaning to the only remarkable event that did occur; the Prince on that occasion adopted the English practice of allowing the ladies to retire alone from the dining-room—a barbarous northern habit, unknown on the continent.

Now, Sir, I happen to be one of those who disapprove of the *coup d'état*, the butcheries on the Boulevards, and the policy since



adopted by the President, quite as strongly as yourself or your foul-mouthed correspondent of this morning ; but being a pretty frequent visitor at Paris, being an Englishman wholly unconnected with French affairs or with the French Government, allow me, for my future guidance, to ask your correspondent, my brother "Englishman," what course he would himself have pursued on the 26th of January, on receiving the President's invitation to dinner.

In all countries we know that invitations from the head of the State are regarded in the light of a command, I have for years been acquainted with the French President, and have been frequently in his house before. Should I, however, have refused this ordinary act of hospitality on the present occasion ; and should I, or should I not, have stated my reasons (and what reasons?) for so doing?

An early answer would be gratefully received, as being about to return to Paris while Lord Derby is amusing himself by trying to form a Government, my old and obstinate acquaintance might possibly again expose me to the alternative of being either considered very ill-bred by him, or being ticketed for the remainder of my life by you as an "oligarchic hater of liberty."

Your obedient servant,

Feb. 21.

M. P.

## I.\*

"M. P." has addressed to me three charges and one question.

I laid the *venue* of the dinner, which, it seems, he helped to consume, at the Tuileries, instead of at the Elysée. Be it so. I had not the honour of either invitation or "command," and the journals or my memory played me false. Elysée or Tuileries, it matters not.

He calls me your "foul-mouthed correspondent." A "foul-mouthed" orator or writer is one who descends to coarse, indecent, or ribald language. My letters are before the public, and I challenge the most critical examination of them. There is not in them one sentiment or one expression unworthy of a gentleman or man of honour. I have been severe, I know, but not a solitary substantive or adjective is other than the symbol of a notorious fact. The only terms that may appear *low* to the old familiar friends of M. Bonaparte and the refined *habitués* of the defunct Crockford's, are perhaps "noodledom" and "flunkeyism." "M. P." will possibly be surprised to learn that the first was immortalized by a legist of the name of Bentham, and the last by an obscure writer who is called Carlyle.

He hints that M. Bonaparte, the "Amphitryon" of the feast, was *not* "eloquent." "M. P." has obviously yet to learn that there exists such a figure of speech as irony. The "Englishman" is perfectly aware of the nature of Louis Napoleon's eloquence. He has not forgotten the display at the tribune of the National Assembly.

"M. P." declares that he disapproves of the *coup d'état* (that

\* *Times*, February 24, 1852.

is, of flagrant perjury and attainted treason), of the *butcheries* upon the Boulevards (I quote his own expression), and of the subsequent *policy* of the President (confiscations, proscriptions, and pillage of the House of Orleans), quite as much as I do. Very well. He then inquires what I *would* and what he *should* do, in the event of a "command" to another dinner at the Elysée. For my part, I am ashamed to say, that even a "command" from a perjurer, traitor, "butcher," and robber, would not find myself, my wife, or my daughter, guests at the table of "the Prince." "M. P.'s" notions of moral obligations and of social ties are very different from mine, and to solve the doubts that distract *his* breast, I would humbly recommend him to empanel a jury of "diners-out" at Boodle's, or consult the oracle at White's.

"M. P." implies, or makes a seeming of implying, that he entertains no "oligarchic hatred of liberty and of the press." I am glad to hear it. I perfectly agree with the estimate he puts upon himself when he owns complacently that he *is* "a noodle;" and I am sure that his vanity will be gratified to find that I consider him the very pink of "flunkeyism."

One word more. I am no "party political writer." I do no man's bidding, accept no man's hire. My poor talents, mean though they be, are at the service of truth, of justice, and of freedom. Cursed be my pen, and palsied be my hand, when either is prostituted to the vile purposes of personal libel, private enmity, or public tyranny.

## II.

*To the Editor of the Times.*

SIR,—Your correspondent, “An Englishman,” gives us his definition of the word “foul-mouthed”—“one who descends to coarse, indecent, or ribald language, and makes use of expressions unworthy a gentleman.” I accept his definition, and beg to inform him that it was because I consider his language coarse and indecent, and his expressions unworthy a gentleman, that I applied to him, and again apply to him, the term which seems so sorely to vex him.

The “Englishman” recommends me to empanel a jury of diners-out at Boodle’s (which, by the bye, is the very dullest idea of a dinner that ever entered the mind of man), to solve the doubts that he supposes may distract my breast. Sir, I entertain no doubts on the point under discussion; but this much I will say, that if your correspondent can find any twelve gentlemen—nay, any *one* man of liberal education—who, adopting the language of this “Englishman,” shall condemn me for the course I pursued, I will be content to withdraw the epithet of foul-mouthed, which I cannot but at present think so aptly fits your correspondent’s style and character.

Forgive me, Sir, for quietly closing my letter without either “cursing my pen or invoking a touch of the palsy;” but I enclose you my card, which is perfectly at the service of your braggart correspondent.

Your obedient servant,

Feb. 24.

M. P.

## II.\*

THESE, I hope, are my very last words to "M. P."

He seems surprised that I should have recommended him, for *his* instruction, to empanel a jury of "diners-out" at Boodle's, *because* a dinner party there would be the incarnation of stupidity. Just so. In accordance with the law of England, he would have a jury of his peers.

He asked me in his last letter what "reason" he could urge for refusing a dinner invitation from his "old and obstinate friend," Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. I forgot to answer him before; I will reply now. The "reason" he might give is what every honourable man would feel, and every wise one feign—*indisposition*.

I ought to apologise for quoting anything so *low* as poetry. "M. P." "disapproves" of Louis Napoleon's "butchery," but not at all of his meat. He is like one Catius, of whom it was said by a "foul-mouthed" fellow, named Pope, that he was a staunch enemy to knaves—

"Save just at dinner—then preferred, no doubt,  
A rogue with venison to a saint without."

"M. P." protests that *he* will not invoke the "palsy." There is no occasion. He has got it.

He still harps on "foul-mouthed." I may find "M. P." with arguments, but neither I nor any man can supply him with the brains to understand them.

"M. P." smirks at what he terms my "indignation." Not at all. One laughs at Pantaloon.

Mr. Baillie Cochrane judiciously disclaims all connexion with

\* *Times*, February 26, 1852.

"M. P." They must settle that between them. His letter is in a very different key from that of his colleague, or his rival. "Where there is shame, there may yet be virtue." He coaxes me to sign my name. Thank you. Until we enjoy the law of signatures, I beg to subscribe myself what I am,

AN ENGLISHMAN.

### III.

[Advertisement.]

*To the Editor of the Times.*

SIR,—Feeling I have no right further to trespass on your indulgence, I request the insertion of these few lines in the shape of an advertisement.

Your correspondent, "An Englishman," is content, it seems, to preserve his anonymous character. The charge of "coarse libeller, and expounder of sentiments unworthy a gentleman and a man of honour," sits lightly on him—a mere matter for literary laughter. Be it so ; I, at least, can have no objection. Let those, however, who have been at the pains of reading this correspondence judge between us ; let them observe also the very congenial answer I have at length elicited to my original question from this *soi-disant* "Englishman." It amounts simply to this—he would have sheltered himself under the plea of a paltry falsehood.

Your correspondent likes poetry ; let him inwardly digest the following :—

"I know them, yea,  
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,  
That lie, and coz, and flout, deprave, and slander,  
Go anticly, and show an outward hideousness,  
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,  
How they might hurt their enemies if they durst ;  
And this is all."

Your obedient servant,

M. P.

## III.\*

IN spite of everybody, "M. P." is determined not only to write, but "advertise" himself an ass. He had already shown that he did not know the meaning of irony, and could not comprehend an argument; he now proves that he cannot understand a pun, and is absolutely ignorant of his own language.

When the "Englishman" suggested to the postulant "M. P." as a "reason" for escaping the distinction of a seat at Louis Napoleon's table, "what every honourable man would feel, and every wise one feign—" *indisposition*," the joke seemed palpable enough. It would be an insult to all other "Englishmen" to tell them, what "M. P." obviously has no idea of, that "indisposition" has two meanings, and that the literal one is *disinclination*.

"M.P.'s" contempt for the "Englishman," as well as for the English tongue, takes refuge in a frantic burst of "poetry," *à propos* of nothing, and winding up with "this is all." I hope so. I have little doubt that, some fine afternoon, Mr. Baillie Cochrane may drop on his repudiated friend at White's or Boodle's, the Conservative or Carlton, spelling over his carefully preserved "advertisement," and muttering, like Swift, as he read his own *Tale of a Tub*, "Good God! what genius I must have had when I wrote this!"

It would be curious to inquire, and interesting to ascertain, what constituency has done itself the immortal honour to select "M. P." for its representative. If obscurity still rests on this

\* *Times*, March 2, 1852.

point, there can be none on the identity of that honourable member, who, on great and stirring occasions of debate, "brays" with a truthfulness denied to any but a genuine donkey, and crows "cock-a-doodle-doo" with a fidelity that never fails to tell upon the House, and is worthy of the highest dunghill.



## LETTER V.\*

## THE CONSTITUTION, THE BUDGET, AND THE OATH.

THE "Constitution" of the 14th of January is now at work. The world may study, and it must admire, the operation of "the right derived from the people, and of the force that comes from God." The tyranny that appropriates the one is worthy of the blasphemy that arrogates the other. That "Constitution" created in the name of seven millions and a half of votes, which were a sham—of 1789, which it falsifies—and of universal suffrage, which it throttles and it cheats:—a President, a Senate, a Council of State, and a Legislature. The Senate and Council of State are directly and avowedly named by the President, who, in point of fact, has named himself; and the Legislature, though ostensibly elected by the people, has really been nominated by the same omnivorous authority. The progress of natural philosophy has simplified our conceptions of the laws that govern the material universe. In lieu of half-a-dozen conflicting forces, we find that attraction is the agent which determines rest or motion, which makes an apple fall, a temple stand, or a planet swing in space. M. Bonaparte's political philosophy is equally concise. Attraction is its sum and substance, attraction which begins and

\* *Times*, April 16, 1852.

ends in him. He is the centre of a solar system, and only satellites revolve around him.

Each vital organism has functions corresponding exactly with its structure, of which they are simply the effects. The comparative anatomist examines some fossil impressions on a rock, marks their zoological characters, and recalls into existence an antediluvian world. The political anatomist may predict with almost equal precision the results of social organizations. A plain and a free people will produce a Leonidas, a Cincinnatus, or a Washington; a polished and turbulent Democracy will breed a Themistocles or an Alcibiades; a dissolute and degenerate Aristocracy and a pauper Plebs will receive a master in a Julius or Augustus; a Prætorian camp and a debauched community will hatch a Commodus or a Heliogabalus. What may we expect from the "Constitution" of France?

The Presidential perquisites and powers might be comprised in the exclamation of Louis XIV.—"*L'état ! c'est moi.*" That compendious despotism had the merit of simplicity and frankness. It would be difficult to say what part of the State belongs to itself, or indeed to anybody else, by the side of a "Chief" who organizes, disorganizes, and commands the forces by sea and land—decides war and peace—makes treaties offensive, defensive, and commercial—appoints to all employments, and deprives of all—regulates and decrees the execution of the laws, and monopolizes their infraction—dispenses justice and dispenses with it—has the sole initiative of legislation, and the *liberum veto*, too—declares martial law and goes beyond it—has the power of pardon, and converts it to a sinecure or employs it only to debauch—makes and breaks Ministers and Ministries—and names his own successor. Call it what we may, Presidency or Empire, this is an absolute Autoeracy. To work, it requires but a Council of

State, or a divan, an army of Janizaries, and a nation of slaves: Force is its vital principle. If viable at all, it must live on terror, and the first symptom of weakness it exhibits is the signal for opposition and the tocsin of its fall. Unless history is really no better than "an old almanack," it proclaims this.

M. Bonaparte comprehends the logic of his situation. He is Cæsar or nothing. He substitutes "authority" for liberty, and he must make "authority" felt, and tread liberty out—he pits the will of one against the intelligence of all, and between intelligence and him there must be war to the death. It may admit of doubt if such a Power is wise in even shamming Representative forms. While strong, it plays with *them*—when weak, they master *it*. The best thing, perhaps, for M. Bonaparte would be no Legislature at all—the next best thing is to render it contemptible. In this, he has perfectly succeeded.

By the last article of the "Constitution," the decrees issued between the 2nd of December and the convocation of "the great bodies of the State," are to have "the force of law." This was not meant to be a *brutum fulmen*. After the confiscation of the Orleans property, the ukases were few and inoffensive, and the week or two preceding the legislative elections were almost a calm. The commercial optimists plunged into their fools' paradise, as usual, and babbled of confidence, clemency, economy, a vast reduction of the army, prosperity, and peace. The elections over, the scene changed. A diarrhœa of decrees succeeded the temporary dictatorial costiveness, and scattered confusion over France. The Tyrant who announced that "he was the State," consistently added, "*après moi le Déluge.*"

Land banks, or the *Crédit Foncier*, had long been a favourite scheme of the Socialists. In operation, good or bad, in Germany, they had been proposed to the Constituent Assembly, and voted

against by Louis Napoleon, through the medium of his Ministers. To catch the electors of the 29th of February, the *Crédit Foncier* was decreed on the 28th, and ten millions of the Orleans revenues were liberally given to set it up. It will promote the spirit of speculation, accelerate the impending monetary crisis, and enable the peasant proprietors of France to borrow at six or seven per cent., in order to buy land which will pay them three,

To purify the administration of justice, and to carry out the article in the Napoleonic Constitution which affirms their *irremovability*, magistrates from 70 to 75 years of age are made removable. The *option* of removing them rests with the Government, which can thus reward the good and smite the bad. The Court of Cassation may dismiss them at any age for "grave misconduct." As political and press offences are now decided by the judges, the opportunities for such "misconduct," as well as for its chastisement, are rife. The condemnation, on appeal, of M. Bocher shows how well this provision acts. The prudence of the Bench responds to the vigour of the President.

On the 3d of March, a little gentle pressure compelled the Bank of France to reduce its rate of discount to 3 per cent. In consideration of an extension of its privilege, which, it would seem, it had a right to claim, it accepts by instalments spread over 15 years, the repayment by the State of 75 millions due in 1852. By this excellent arrangement, M. D'Argout continues to keep his place; the Bank can encourage speculation by advances upon railway shares; its weekly returns, which exhibited the deplorable state of trade, are exchanged for monthly and more convenient ones, and the Government can squander the 75 millions to-day, and put off its debts till to-morrow.

Concurrently with this financial "operation," an order was issued for thirteen different costumes for thirteen sets of functionaries.

We are not informed if the Bank may make advances upon *them*, though the vast amount of the precious metals consumed in their decoration would, perhaps, warrant it in doing so. As a later decree has transferred the direction of the Monts de Piété to the Prefect of the Seine and the Minister of the Interior, they may soon enjoy the opportunity of estimating at their market value the habits of many of their friends. If the *coup d'état* has plunged the half of France in mourning, it has put the other half in livery.

In the middle of January the *Constitutionnel* announced the proximate conversion of the Five per Cents. This was instantly and flatly contradicted by the *Moniteur*. That contradiction rendered the occurrence highly probable. Early in March, similar rumours led to a similar denial. The *rentiers* went to sleep on the night of the 13th, officially, if not comfortably reassured, and awoke next morning to ascertain, from that same *Moniteur*, that they had lost the tenth of their income. Those who approved of the immortal *Plébiscite*, and voted "*oui*" for the President, will not regret that paltry diminution. They shouted exultingly that "France was saved," and surely its salvation is worth a half per cent. The millions squeezed from them will adorn the civil list, and will sustain those faithful Senators and patriotic Prefects who are the Corinthian pillars of the Napoleonic edifice. M. Bineau made a trivial mistake in his calculation of the cost of the "conversion." Thirty to forty millions must be directly reimbursed; and the country was only snatched from insolvency and a "convulsion" by the banking and the railway millionaires. The Plutocracy was coaxed and bullied to fly to the rescue of the Government, with enormous and desperate purchases of stock guaranteed by *it*. This virtually amounts to a loan of from two to three hundred millions. If these financial

*coups d'état* are backed and carried through by capitalists, they may find them Pyrrhic victories.

The "Constitution" informed the Corps Législatif that it would be suffered "to discuss and vote the *taxes*," to lay the imposts on the nation's back, but to have no voice in their expenditure. So popular a privilege was worthy so popular a body. The very fact of that small permission being granted, afforded, however, a natural presumption that it would be withdrawn. Accordingly, on the 19th of March, ten days before the "Legislature" met, the Budget came out in a decree. The proceeding was not without advantages. It made the Corps Législatif ridiculous—it was consistent with the practice of M. Bonaparte, who is far too great to respect a promise—it asserted the imperial "dogma" of "authority"—it dispensed with *parlage*—it cut short impertinent curiosity—it prevented scandals, which "the eternal enemies of order" might fish from the balance sheet of the *coup d'état*, the Presidential household, and the Ministry—and it exhibited the delightful spectacle of a Budget positively in "equilibrium."

There are various kinds of "equilibrium." The vulgar one is to rest upon the feet, but there is nothing remarkable in that. One gentleman astonishes the streets of London by poisoning a pipe on the tip of his nose—another stands with his head on a spear—a third borrows the brawny limbs of a fellow mountebank, and hangs by them in various and grotesque fashions. The "equilibrium" of the Budget is a *pose arithmétique* of this description. It is a deep financial exercitation, worthy of the most "pleasant" days of Hudson. To a common-place economist, who merely trusts in figures, this most miraculous equilibrium would seem a deficit of 53 millions *now*, and when the

civil list and "the supplementary credits" are thrown in, of 100 millions at the least.

Since this budget by proclamation, a charming item has *not* added to the income. The 35 millions appropriated by M. Bonaparte from the Orleans spoil to assurance societies, labourers' lodgings, the legion of "honour," and the curates' fund, are now to be raised by the sale of the national forests. The confiscated property is taken in pawn to secure repayment. A revolution may disturb this larcenous thimble-rig, and "the little pea" may not be found where M. Bonaparte has seemed to put it. The 35 millions of bribes, in the mean time, go to assist the "equilibrium."

The Prefects are deservedly in good odour. Their exertions during the last twelve months have been most exemplary. *They* were the elegiasts of the Emperor gone, the trumpeters of the Emperor to come—*they* hunted down the Socialist game which M. Carlier started—*they* cooked, for the *gobemouches* of "the great party of order," the daily *déjeuner* in the morning journals of departmental *Jacqueries*, conspiracies, and *carmagnoles*—*they* organized the *claqueurs* for the Presidential progresses, and brigaded the Bonapartist *troupe* for the balls and banquets—*they* managed the petitioning against the Constituent Assembly, and that for the revision of the Constitution—*they* covered the *coup d'état* with the pretended rising of the Red Republicans—*they* manufactured the seven millions and a half of votes—*they* took charge of universal suffrage and freedom of election for the Corps Législatif—and *they* are destined for the glorious mission of duly getting up the Empire. Gratitude is said to be a lively sense of future favours? M. Bonaparte makes it a retaining fee for future services. His decree on what he jocosely christens

“decentralization” is both a reward and bribe. The Prefects obtain the monopoly of the business and of the jobs of their Departments. They are more than Pashas in irresponsible authority, and they only need the horse-tails, the bowstring, and the bastinado. Their salaries are augmented as liberally as their perquisites. The celebrated commissaries of Ledru Rollin passed for the incarnation of republican rapacity. These cormorants pouched for three months’ work, 150*l.* a piece. As a set-off against this profligate profusion, the Republic reduced the income of the Prefects a third below the standard of the Revolution of July. M. Bonaparte has raised it above *that* level, and has almost doubled the Budget of the Prefectures, by the trifling addition of nearly two millions to the prosperous Budget of the State. Another help to the “equilibrium.”

The Legion of Honour already owed much to Louis Napoleon. Its riband was like the recruiting sergeant’s, and was fastened on all who would enlist for Bonaparte. The “legion” was as numerous and almost as respectable as the gendarmerie. It was a mark of singularity *not* to belong to it. The position it now holds is higher still. On the 21st of March, the President reviewed the Parisian regiments, paternally addressed them, in imitation of Feargus O’Connor, as his “glorious children,” and generously bestowed on a considerable number of “distinguished” privates the order, a medal, and 100 francs per annum, filched from the House of Orleans. Twenty of these new ornaments of the Legion were selected for their exploits in the great days of December. These heroes of the Boulevards have no reason to complain. Five francs and upwards for the job, a jollification on *eau-de-vie*, brutal arrests of unarmed representatives, brilliant assaults on undefended barricades, and a *battue* of the *bourgeoisie*, are “glorious” claims for decoration and a pension. Their



brothers in riband must be gratified to think that these fresh associates are the "butchers" of their parents, relatives, and friends. M. Bonaparte, however, has stamped a new chivalry upon the corps, by conferring on it the enviable privilege, though rather difficult task, of swearing a solemn oath of fidelity to honour *and* to him.

The speakers of the Peace Society inquire with ingenuous simplicity, what motive could possibly impel French soldiers to assail their British brothers. Fraternity is, we know, a military virtue, and armies are *not* drilled to passive obedience, broken to discipline, formed and flogged to do the bidding of the State, fond of plunder, greedy of promotion, given to gazettes and glory, nor disposed to do a little quiet business in blood, rape, robbery, and arson. Admitting these too obvious truisms, it is still questionable if the soldiery of France would decidedly refuse to execute a "razzia" upon "merry England," Peace Society and all, were the order issued and the feat *possible*. The bandits who, in their own capital, for four shillings and two pence each, poured drunken volleys into first-floor windows, shot at their doors unresisting citizens, bayoneted their flying shrieking countrywomen, and were dubbed for this new Massacre of St. Bartholomew, "heroes" in the order of the day, "glorious children" of the President, and pensionaries of the Legion of Honour, are not likely to be more particular in their dealings with "perfidious Albion." These amateur preachers of peace at all price are the *élite* of monomaniacs. They require keepers, not reporters—their place is Hanwell, not the London Tavern—and their chairman should be Dr. Conolly.

Oaths appear to share with "costumes" Louis Napoleon's leisure hours. Extensive practice and personal experience render him a high authority in both. In November, 1836, he

pledged his "honour" to Louis Philippe that he would trouble France no more. The expedition to Boulogne was the ratification of the promise. On the 20th of December, 1848, he swore, "in the presence of God and man," to be true to the Republic and the Constitution. On three subsequent occasions, he clinched that oath with new, spontaneous, and uncalled-for sanctions. The "honour" pledged to Louis Philippe, having come again into his possession, was pawned to the Republic, for the benefit of *it* and his "successor." On the 2nd of December, "God and man" saw that "honour" a second time redeemed, those asseverations verified, and those oaths fulfilled. M. Bonaparte thinks with Hudibras,

"He that imposes an oath makes it,  
Not he that, for convenience, takes it;  
Then how can any man be said  
To break an oath he never made?"

To those who rise to a philosophic view of the obligations of truth and swearers, this reasoning will probably be satisfactory. Perhaps it is on some such theory that M. Bonaparte, who has imposed on all, "imposes" oaths on every functionary. From Judges to the runners of the Court, from Senators to door-keepers, from Prefects to their touters, from the Council of State to the Gardes Champêtres, all swear allegiance to the President and to their places, and plunge with the same readiness into livery and perjury. They conceive, no doubt, that they are bound to follow M. Bonaparte's example, and that the most delicate compliment which they can offer, is to *keep* their oaths as he has done.

The vulgar perjurer who receives his sentence from a Bench awful with wigs and ermine, imagines, perhaps, that those solemn

lips which consign *him* to the hulks, are the sacred sanctuary of truth and justice. The judges of France are wiser in their generation. They naturally ask—

“Why should not Conscience have vacation,  
As well as other Courts i’ the nation?”

In their holiday exhilaration, these venerable men display quite a juvenile alacrity in swearing. Their president, Portalis, who had sworn in turns to the Empire, the Restoration, and the Revolution of July, and who *would* have sworn to the Republic had it wanted him, has *twice* already with *gaieté de cœur* taken an oath to M. Bonaparte. He has attained the age of 75, the grand climacteric of Napoleonian judges, when the slightest indiscretion may lay them on the shelf. The “head” of the magistracy has been followed by its “body,” who have swallowed their oaths *in globo*. This devotion to their country is the more laudable, as some had attainted M. Bonaparte as traitor in the High Court of Justice, and some had condemned him to imprisonment for life after the invasion of Boulogne.

In all France there are four men who have refused to swear to successful usurpation. Three Republican deputies, Cavaignac, Carnot, and Hénou, have protested in a simple and a noble letter, and one poor huissier has resigned his place rather than violate his conscience. Legitimist nobles, Orleanist millionaires, the princes of the Church, and the dignitaries of the judgment seat, have “murmured” at the audacity, and laughed, we may be sure, at the squeamishness of those recusants, and affronted with indifference the penalties of Heaven and contempt of men. Before this swelling tide of official perjury, France will become a people of liars, and every man, woman, and child a Jesuit.

With a view to effect, the eve of the assemblage of “the

great bodies of the State" was signalized by a decree, which proclaimed the cessation of the state of seige in "Continental France," and announced that, in future, all *arrests* would be "according to law." As trial by jury has become a myth, as the judges are punishable and removable, as the *habeas corpus* for judge or prisoner would be somewhat difficult to serve, and as "law" means M. Bonaparte's good pleasure, the boon may be placed in the same category with universal suffrage, freedom of election, the "Republic," the "Constitution," and many other peculiar Bonapartist blessings.

The "dictatorship" and the "decrees" have terminated, like most public entertainments, by a grand finale. It would be useless to count, and most narcotic to detail, the titles of the motley group. They range from cod-bangers to cathedral chapters, from pawnbrokers to Presbyterian synods, from the Society Islands to the slums of Paris. They "protect" soda, sugar, and maid-servants—annihilate public meetings, and create private monopolies—multiply oaths, dictate prayers, and stimulate gambling and speculation—declare alike the wages of the Senate, the salaries of chaplains, and the rewards of convicts—muzzle the printers, and license the Bank—extend a bonus to cavalry horses and to railway "stags"—amnesty deserters, and exile magistrates—settle the duties on salted fish, and unsettle those of the whole community.

M. Bonaparte proclaims to his crouching helots and his gaping dupes that his "mission" is the restoration of "authority." Authority in the Imperial vocabulary is the reign of Jesuitism, hypocrisy, and lies—the deification of perjury, and adoration of success—intelligence burked by the gagging of the press, or brutalized by its degradation—morality poisoned by the narcotism of corruption—society stifled by the hand of the police,

and the domestic hearth polluted by the spy—liberty crushed beneath the heel of the cuirassier and the gendarme—public slavery rivetted by private vice—the Legislature a sham and swindle, and legislators mere tax-gatherers and lackeys—finance a chaos of rapacity, clap-trap, and profusion—the altar partitioned between Loyola and Machiavelli—trickery and violence nicknamed “Government”—crime termed “Providence,” and blasphemy called “God.”

If this be the “mission” of tyrannies and tyrants, then England has her “mission” too. It is to feed those beacon-lights of Liberty, which, dead or dying on the Continent of Europe, blaze only on her headlands; for she is its Vestal Virgin, and must watch by night and day lest the sacred flame expire.

## LETTER VI.

## THE DAILY AND NAPOLEONIAN PRESS OF FRANCE.\*

THE "Fourth Estate" is no longer an Estate in France. The Law on the Press is a razzia of Chasseurs de Vincennes. Before the 2nd of December, the printing trade of the Republic maintained nearly 400,000 souls, and represented a capital of about 400 millions.† That trade is in a state of thralldom the most abject, and prostration the most complete.

The Augustan age was the culminating point of the literature of Rome, and the master of the world was the companion of Mæcenas, and the friend as well as patron of Horace and of Virgil. M. Bonaparte would seem to prefer the glory of the Caliph Omar. The fanatic Moslem burnt, to satisfy his Muftis and his Ulemahs, the Library of Alexandria. Gibbon suspects that Omar is calumniated. No future historian of the actual Lower Empire can extend the benefit of that charitable doubt to the Omar of to-day. The Jesuit acolyte sacrifices to the followers of Loyola the University of France. The chairs of philosophy are overturned, the lessons of Descartes and Locke are supplanted by the scholastic logic of Aristotle and the monkish casuistry of the Sorbonne, and the Parisian youth may shortly hear some new

\* Not published in the *Times*, May 7, 1852.

† Of *france*.

Père Loriquet anathematise the heretical blasphemy of Bacon, and the damnable errors of Copernicus and Galileo.

In this Bœotian "æra of the Cæsars," the Prefect of Police is the God of Letters. Louis XIV. suffered Corneille to live in indigence, the first Napoleon ostentatiously declared he would have made him "Prince," and M. Bonaparte brutally proscribes some pious verses to his memory. Michelet, the historian and painter of the Jesuits, is offered as a holocaust to their revenge; and Quinet and Mickiewicz, the enemies of tyranny, are victims to its fears and fury. The most illustrious Professors of France are ignominiously cashiered, her poets and novelists are prisoners or exiles, and her publicists are mutes if they disdain to sink into Imperial parasites and criers.

The *coup d'état* descended on 250 Journals, of the computed market value of 15 millions, and affording an existence to 18,000 or 20,000 persons. From 3,000 to 4,000 in Paris alone drew from the daily Press their daily bread. The hurricane is far from spent, and 49 Journals have been swept away in the Departments, while 12 have disappeared in Paris. The Revolution, struck "to save the Republic," has displayed its old Saturnian voracity, for the majority of the newspapers devoured by it were Republican. The cheap ones have sunk under the aggravated weight of stamp and postage, and the elevation of the caution money from 24,000 to 50,000 francs has been fatal to all but the most robust. The editors of the strangled Press are in concealment, flight, or prison, deported to Algeria, driven to Belgium or to London, or emigrants to the United States. Their families are plunged in misery and want—their working staff are rotting in the hospitals or starving on the *pavé*—and the proprietary see their capital confiscated by the champion, *par excellence*, of "property".

To those who remember the Parisian journals in their palmy days of vivacity, intelligence, and wit, their present aspect is indeed lugubrious :—

“Heu! quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore.”

Newspapers without news—political organs without politics—they live only to transcribe the *Moniteur*, of which each is an *alter idem*, diversified by a diary, an almanack, and an obituary, the market price and daily sale of silks, horned cattle, senators, and swine; the latest functionaries who took their oaths, and the last who took their wages; feuilletons for the gratification of young women; and dissertations, in the style of Philosopher Square, for the edification of old ones. They are a troop of undertakers, trapped in the dismal livery of death, and bound for the Père la Chaise of constitutional freedom. Even the *Charivari* has learnt what appeared the impossible lesson of dulness. Rabelais, fixing his last look on his canonicals, expired as he murmured “*beati qui moriuntur in Domino.*” More have been enabled to imitate the humour than to rival the stoicism of the irreverent monk, and the *Charivari* finds it hard to jest with the Corsican knife at the throat. The Napoleonic Vendetta is no joke.

The *Presse*, the *Siècle*, the *Assemblée Nationale*, and *Débats* remind us painfully of those “*quatre officiers*” who formed the funeral *cortège* of Marlbrook :—

“L’un portait son gros sabre,  
Miron-ton, miron-ton, miron-taine!  
L’un portait son gros sabre,  
Et l’autre ne portait rien.”

The Fates granted to men three warnings; M. Bonaparte vouchsafes no more than two. The first “notice” of the Prefect



of Police despatches the Journal to the condemned cell—the second leaves it for execution—the hangman and the cord follow at his leisure. His “paternal” solicitude for the “interests” of the Press is shown by the vigour with which he chastises it, for the *Corsaire* has been seized, the *Presse* and the *Charivari* have been “warned,” and the provincial papers are cowering or succumbing under a reign of terror.\* Woe to the man of honour or intelligence who becomes a journalist. The police net will catch him in Belgium, here, or anywhere. A new law is to subject him to *criminal* penalties for “offences of the Press in foreign countries.” So long as he remains a Frenchman he remains a slave, and whilst this debasing tyranny endures, he may not, in either hemisphere, whisper a sound or pen a line, save that of servile adulation.

This new version of “the Spider and the Fly” is not confined to France. The *Patrie* menaces the correspondents of foreign Journals, or of French ones published in foreign countries. M. de Maupas has in store for all who disseminate “false news” a trial, and, if guilty, imprisonment for a year and a fine of 40*l*.

The threat involves the usual amount of hypocritical audacity. The charge of uttering “false news” is as elastic as a garter, and just as conclusive as a bowstring. When the Journals reported the proximate conversion of the five per cents., the *Moniteur* contradicted the “false news.” After St. Arnaud had resigned and reluctantly resumed his ministry, in consequence of the confiscation of the Orleans property, the *Patrie* or the *Moniteur* denounced as “false news” the rumour of a misunderstanding.

\* The *Corsaire* is slain—the *Presse* has had two warnings—so has the *Constitutionnel*. The “Providence” of M. Bonaparte has, for once, been righteous, and dispensed poetic justice to these prophets of Bonapartism. The Departmental Press cannot bury, and can barely count, its dead.

ing. The transmission of an insulting note to Switzerland was officially repudiated as "false news." The Government of M. Bonaparte lives on false news—the *coup d'état* was born of it—the Empire is being hatched in it. False news is the current coin of France: it is the legal standard and the only circulating medium. Unfortunately, Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was a layman, or he would supersede St. Denis and become her patron Saint. The Napoleonic star is Mercury, the God of deportation, theft, and lies. To charge Parisian Correspondents with "false news," is to turn them over to M. de Maupas, whose springes may be warranted to catch whatever woodcocks he may set them for. To accuse is to condemn. There is no jury for the Press, and if there are "judges in Berlin," the *Patrie* proclaims that none must be found upon the Seine. M. Bonaparte does not ask *much* of the magistracy—he merely requires it to engross his warrants, lock up his prisoners, and transport his victims. Anything more would be impertinence to him and rank treason to the people, for he is himself and the people too. By this *tour de main*, M. Bonaparte strikes at the freedom of the Press, not only in France but in Europe and America. It remains to be seen if Europe and America will bow to the Imperial insolence.\*

The sarcastic wit of Voltaire styled his countrymen a compound of "the tiger and the monkey." The first Revolution appeared to justify the bitter libel, and the Goddess of Reason, with her frantic Saturnalia and her bloody lictors, seemed its hideous incarnation. But the France of later days had won a nobler epigram, and the popular triumphs of July and February were not more decisive of the courage of her sons, than of their gene-

\* Thanks to Lord Malmesbury the attempt was made—thanks to Parliament it was defeated.

rosity and mercy. The *coup d'état* has revived the Voltairian sentence, and its actors repeat the characters and parts that history had damned. Their feline as well as simian features are represented with fidelity.

A little previously to the elections for the *Corps Législatif*, a gentle latitude was permitted to the Press. The cat played with the mouse. The credulous hailed the advent of "a regulated liberty," and unwary writers were tickled to a nibble at the bait of the police. The *Siècle* ventured on a playful opposition, and pricked the Government with the *coups d'épingle* of Léon Plée. An "officious" notice was enough for that, and for several weeks "indisposition" appeared to have seized upon one whose style gave an edge to his delicate wit. The proprietors of this once able journal were alarmed, and resolved that dumbness was discretion. It did not desert, though it dared not defend the popular cause; and it furtively sketched a domestic tyrant under the name of Rosas, and the moral and material benefits of liberty under that of England and the United States. M. Cousin declared that, in philosophy, Britain is *not* "great,"\* and compared the revolution of France with ours. The *Siècle* parodied that impartial judgment, and proved, or offered to prove, to the *Times*, that England holds only a secondary place in the van of freedom and of nations. M. Cousin is dismissed from the Council of the University, and the *Siècle* wears the Bonapartist padlock on its lips. It is well to conquer a principle or institution—it is still better to retain it. The hare did *not* beat the tortoise.

The *Débats* broke, for once, its prudent silence, to remonstrate softly with its readers. It might, it observed, say something

\* *Cours de Philosophie*. National prejudice jumps exactly with perverted fact. The clearness and success of Locke contrast with the failure and mysticism of M. Cousin.

civil of M. Bonaparte, but it unfortunately *could* not—it would, perhaps, say something rude, but it notoriously *must* not. The logical conclusion and the wisest course was clearly to say nothing of M. Bonaparte at all; and this it had done, and it proposed to do. The strategy is more conducive to the safety of the Journal than to the instruction of its readers, who discover that increase of margin marches *pari passu* with increase of price, and that there exists an inverse ratio between the type and contents. M. Armand Bertin promises, however, that although he will write very little about France, his subscribers shall be made acquainted with all that has occurred at Buenos Ayres—that he means to keep his eye upon the poll in England—and that he will obtain the most authentic information respecting the American expedition to Japan. The Parisians must be *very* hard to please if they are not satisfied with this.

The *Presse* is paradox as usual. M. de Girardin, the apostle of success, who asserts that all Governments, *de facto*, are alike, and that Francia, while he reigns, is as good as Washington—who, more than any man, assisted Louis Napoleon to his place, and who preached confidence in his honour and his oath—who vowed to die in defence of the Assembly, and who fled to Belgium, only to return to the direction of the *Presse*—who declares his unflinching constancy to the Republic, and proves it by attacking the Republicans—who proclaims the danger he incurs from Bonaparte, and braves it by abuse of Cavaignac—who recommends, for theoretical simplicity or in bitter jest, that Louis Napoleon should dispense with a Legislature, and tolerate no Journal but the *Moniteur*—who protested that, though others affected to be cramped, he felt *his* hands and pen at ease,—feigned to believe that the President *does* wish to preserve the Republic, simply because he has said so, and argued accordingly

against the Empire. The receipt of an *avertissement* from the Prefect of Police may, perhaps, convince M. de Girardin, that though logic is an item in the new Bonapartist scheme of education, it is a luxury not meant for common use, but exclusively reserved for the programmes of the Government and the sacred seminaries of the Jesuits.

M. Bonaparte is said to complain with a sigh that he possesses only venal pens. What would he have? The Barbary pirate stocks his harem with his purchases in the Bazaar and his prizes on the sea, but his guards are eunuchs and his women slaves. He could not, if he would, win the rational esteem and truthful aid of an equal union and a sacred hearth—he would not, if he could, be tied by its duties and its obligations. The convictions and intelligence, as well as the affections, are not for sale. The Condottieri of the pen, like those of the sword, bring into the camp the licence, insubordination, disloyalty, and scandal of free companies. They fight for booty—they desert defeat; they were yesterday for the Republic—to-day they are for Bonaparte—they may charge for Saint Denis and Henri Cinq to-morrow. Mercenaries, they are scorned as such, and they earn at once the wages and the fame of Presidential *claqueurs* and Imperial pimps.

The reader, if there be such, of the Journals of the Government, might seriously imagine that Paris is Stamboul, and they its Muezzins. They severally drawl from their devoted columns the monotonous matutinal prayer:—"Allah il Allah! there is but one Bonaparte, and we are his only Prophets." Considering the simple Theism of their worship, their mutual rivalry is singular. It is urged with the desperation of jealousy and interest, and the struggle is fierce for the subventions of Napoleon and the coy subscriptions of the public. The *Pays* at the same time reduced its price, and greatly augmented its dimensions, in

order to ruin the *Constitutionnel*. The *Constitutionnel* has lowered *its* price in order to destroy the *Pays*. The *Patrie* wages a life and death struggle with both; and the *Moniteur* has been considerably cheapened, in order to annihilate them all. The war of tariffs of this happy family is surpassed by that of Billingsgate, and while they pelt each other with abuse, and tear their rags of character, they serve, like drunken Helots, for a practical example of the baseness of servility and prostitution.

The *Constitutionnel* is false to its actual name and to its ancient principles. It earned its reputation as the champion of the tribune, and it denounces "parliamentarism"—it was Voltairian *par excellence*, and it abets the Jesuits. It dodges between two necessities—to serve M. Bonaparte and *preserve* its subscribers. To retain the latter, it now and then ventures to hesitate dislike at some Presidential atrocity—to mollify the former, it instantly recants, with a fulsome palinodia in its honour. Its existence hangs by the single thread of the will of the police. The engineer is "hoist with his own petard"—the brazen bull again includes its fabricator—the guillotine decapitates its maker. Retribution stalks upon the scene, and reserving the great criminals for their destiny of guilt and for a riper vengeance, clutches its meaner victims.

Whoever has had the good fortune to taste the *Pâte Regnault*, is aware that Dr. Véron is the great composer of the *Constitutionnel* and it. The benefactor of his species studied medicine, and such was his proficiency in anatomy and therapeutics, that it gained him the appointment of physician-in-chief to the Royal Museums! He performed the duties of his extraordinary office to the great advantage of his patients, and repaired, we may presume, with chirurgical solidity and a chaste elegance, the fractures to which statuary is prone. Beneath his

hands, Apollo once more became entire, and Mercury might thank him for a regenerated nose. We are told that a provident countryman of ours, making the round of Rome, took off his hat to Jupiter Capitolinus, and begged the ex-deity to remember *him*, if ever he returned to power. The positive services of Dr. Véron deserved a more immediate recompense, and the gratitude of the Gods of Physic inspired him with the idea of the *Pâte Regnault*. Whatever the ingredients of this divine electuary, the faith of deglutition and the force of puffing turned them into francs and fortune. The Doctor bade adieu to the rigid, however lovely, limbs of the Medicean Venus, disappeared from the Musæum, and by a metamorphosis or metempsychosis not unworthy of the page of Ovid, reappeared as director of the Opera. The *beau réel* supplanted on its boards the *beau idéal*. The draperies of Norma and the postures of the Coryphées displayed the gusto of the Manager, while the unprecedented health of the troupe testified triumphantly to the salubrious *pdte*. "Robert the Devil" was presented by the Author, and, they say, rejected by the Doctor. It was brought out, notwithstanding, took the town by storm, and made him a millionaire. What the supernal deities began, the infernal seem to have completed; and it is owing, perhaps, to his favour with the latter, that Dr. Véron was designated by public rumour as President of the "Hells," which M. Bonaparte would "rehabilitate." From the Opera, the Doctor proceeded to the *Constitutionnel*, the name of which is equally expressive of his early studies and his great discovery. But a wasting atrophy consumed the journal, which seemed to be sinking all the faster the more he dosed it with his articles. It was saved by Eugène Sue and the *Juif Errant*, and M. Véron has handsomely repaid the former, by helping to drive him into exile, and the latter, by

sustaining the fanatic party, which lays it under excommunication.

The literary talents of the Constitutional Paillasse are on a par with his pharmaceutical. I am, unfortunately, ignorant of the precise virtues of the *Pâte Regnault*, but there cannot be a question of the anodyne powers of his articles. He has commenced, but we may hope he will never conclude, a series of essays on "Young France." They are a literary "Daffy's elixir," and are admirably calculated to stupefy the patient. Envy itself must allow him the possession of that imperturbable impudence, which forms so precious a stock of capital both for the Press and for the Chamber. He condescendingly patronised Napoleon—affects Lucullus—was elected Member of the *Corps Législatif* to the unassuming cry of "Long live Véron, the father of the people"—has won the *gamin* title of Representative of Sceaux\*—and agrees with Hudibras—

—— "that nothing's borne

With greater ease than public scorn,

That all affronts do still give place

To an impenetrable face,

That makes its way through all affairs,

As pigs through hedges creep with theirs."

The Doctor has made a remarkable hit, and displayed his professional accuracy of diagnosis. The daily and weekly Journals of Great Britain may be almost as denunciatory as the old Greek Chorus, towards the men and acts of December; but the real sentiments of the good and great, of Queen and aristocracy, must be sought in the *Court Journal*. We had erroneously supposed that the Journal in question had a limited though select circle of Subscribers. It was looked on as the faint heb-

\* Sots.



domadal echo of the morning prattle of the *Morning Post*, and the weakly organ of some dainty dowagers, their dusty footmen, and their too susceptible maids. These sentimental Abigails may possibly reflect the un-English feelings of their mistresses, for, before and since the rape of the Sabines, ladies have been found to admire force. But it may be questioned if the men of plush are the authentic type of the opinions of John Bull, whatever they may be of his calves.

The *Patrie* rejoices under the ownership, and groans under the leaders of M. Delamarre. There was an athlete who suffered, for a handsome wager, a broad-wheeled waggon to pass over his chest. The *Patrie* and its readers daily undergo that ponderous infliction. M. Jourdain would neither talk prose nor verse—M. Delamarre's articles, though filtered through the quill of M. Linguet, realise the feat. M. Delamarre is as heavy a man as writer, and ranks as drum-major in the *Corps Législatif*. Everything by turns and nothing long, he has been *garde-du-corps*, banker, dynastic, adynastic, republican, and Bonapartist. After the "Catastrophe" of February, the *Patrie* was positively "read," and recommended, I think, the Provisional Government to decree a national bankruptcy! During the revolutionary fever, its ardour mounted above blood-heat; but as the fortunes of the Republic waned, it fell to M. Bonaparte and zero. It will serve him until it is the time to sell him.

In these days of pretentious mediocrity, excellence, no matter what, deserves reward. The *Patrie* rivals the old reputation of Mr. Dundas, and shows in its facts the powers of its imagination, in its jokes the strength of its memory. By dint of an impudence that never blushes, and an industry that never flags, it deservedly enjoys the distinguished honour of being the most mendacious newspaper in Europe. Speculating upon this, many

persons have supposed that a simple mode of arriving at the fact is to believe the reverse of what the *Patrie* states. It must be obvious, however, that if it *always* lied, it might as well tell the truth. It is too great a master of mendacity for that, and it mixes its falsehoods with facts enough to make them both deceive.

The *Pays* is the Bonapartist laureate. It is modelled on the style of that old romaunce which lent its inspiration to Don Quixote. Antithesis and metaphor, allegory, apostrophe, and panegyric strut along its columns on their loftiest stilts, like so many peasants of the Landes. Its dithyrambics are evoked by everything Napoleonic, and it shames even the loyalty of our own Fitzgerald and of that "Address":—

"God bless the Guards, though worsted Gallia scoff!  
 God bless their pigtails, though they're now cut off!  
 And if in Downing Street Old Nick should revel,  
 England's Prime Minister, God bless the Devil!"

M. de la Guéronnière is decidedly convinced that Louis Napoleon is Aurungzebe, and he the Great Nazir. The *Pays* that he edits is not France, but the emerald valley of Cashmere. A voluptuous haze steals over the landscape and subdues the sense—the atmosphere is redolent of musk and myrrh—the bulbul serenades the rose, and the garden queen blushes as of yore—houris are in the heavens, peris in the air, and on the sward lie fair Circassian girls, pillowed on silken cushions and on beds of asphodel, who smile enchanted on the tender Fad-ladeen, as he wakes to soft Napoleonic strophes his unpaid-for lyre, or warbles to the dulcimer his Imperial airs.

I shun the covey of unclean birds, the Cassagnacs, the Jubinals, and Césénas, who crush, with flapping pinions, to the

harpy feast. Their screams, voracity, and filth chase from the board morality and decency; and the viands they have torn, and the fragments that they leave, are unfit for human lips.

Nor need I dwell on the ignoble crew, whose ephemeral life has graced or disgraced the ultra Bonapartist Journals. The *Napoléon*, the *Public*, the *France Napoléonienne*, and, possibly, a score to boot, have lived only to die, springing up amidst indifference, to disappear beneath contempt. The imperial Grub Street has vomited its dunces, to dive into that common sewer of oblivion in which their predecessors sank:—

“Next plunged a feeble and a desperate pack,  
With each a sickly brother at his back:  
Sons of a day, just buoyant on the flood,  
Then numbered with the puppies in the mud.  
Ask ye their names? I could as soon disclose  
The names of these blind puppies as of those.  
An undistinguished brass this record bears:  
‘These are—ah no! these were the Gazetteers!’”

An idea had got abroad in Europe, that the *coup d'état* was a deliberate massacre; that the fusillades, incarcerations, exiles, deportations were the apogee of savagery and violence; and that mercy might mitigate, but never could efface, its brutal violation of every law.

The *Assemblée Nationale* is the organ of those Doctrinaires, whose infatuated obstinacy overturned the dynasty of Orleans. It astonished Paris, disgusted France, damaged Monarchy, and damned itself, by announcing, on the 8th of April last, that M. Bonaparte displayed a pernicious leniency, that “the bad took courage, and the good began to tremble!” The fury that could prompt so infamous a cry is fully equalled by its madness. It unmistakeably informed the masses what a Restoration had in

store, and conjured up a new detestable array of "*terreurs blanches*," "*trestaillons*," and "*brigands de la Loire*."

Unhappy land! Thy deepest degradation is to witness thy unworthy sons, squatting like Ghouls upon the bloody corpses of their countrymen, scratched from their new graves and green in earth; and gibbering, in their obscene and infernal orgie, frantic maledictions of fratricidal hate.

## LETTER VII.

## WHY "STATESMEN" EMBODY A MILITIA.

THIS letter was published, under the signature of "A Saxon," in the *Daily News*. Is it necessary to observe that it is one long irony?

I go along with those who object to a Militia at the present moment. Our real power, for aggression or defence, resides in our marine. Let that be what it *should* be, and we may laugh at an invasion. I am perfectly ready to discuss *that* matter with whoever will put on the gloves.

No man of sense would underrate the military arm. The *manes* of the Soldier whom Europe is now mourning, would resent the wrong. Clothe, drill, equip, and arm your men in the best possible fashion—reform the Ordnance—wake the Horse-Guards—construct and complete some judicious works—arrange your strategy—organise your force—end that contemptible Caffre war, and recall battalions whose valour is expended in running after thieves that they can never catch, and marching into fastnesses only to march out again—avail yourselves of steam, the railway, and the telegraph—and sleep in peace.

But this letter was not pointed to such purposes. It was levelled at a sham. "Statesmanship" has made itself a standing

jest. Its stilted dignity and crafty policy have just come to this:—it is jammed in a ridiculous dilemma. It proclaimed the pacific intentions of Napoleon, and demanded subsidies of men and money only justifiable by hostile ones—it cried peace and prepared war—talked friendship and enacted hate—desired the nation to hold its tongue and to remain at ease, and clapped it into regimentals. Either what it said was false, or what it did was foolish.

This may serve for Austria or for M. Bonaparte, but such miserable *ruserie* revolts the moral and the common sense of England. This lumbering craft, the mongrel spawn of "Asian mysteries" and cockney flams, is fitter for the planks of Katerfelto than the boards of the House of Commons. What is the result? The Peace Society exploits the speeches and caricatures the measures of the "Statesmen"—it proves that one or the other is a cheat—and the insincerity or extravagance of Parliament is patent to the dullest hind. Can honesty and policy be associated nowhere but in infant copy-books and Sunday schools? Shall they never meet in the Councils of the People? Must they always be tabooed amongst the sons of men?

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THE Government and the House of Commons, in defiance alike of ridicule and reason, of consistency and common sense, are resolved to carry the Militia Bill. The country looks on with vacant resignation, half-frightened into believing that it is really required, half-indignant at the barefaced sham.

The history of the measure is calculated to bring "statesmanship" into contempt. Before the meeting of parliament, Louis Napoleon struck his *coup d'état*. Lord Palmerston expressed his approbation of the act, and was dismissed by Lord John Russell, who evinced an equivocal *disapprobation* of it. The press gave

utterance to the cry of outraged justice and morality, and the public voice re-echoed it, with the demand for a squadron in the Channel and the offer of volunteer rifle corps.

Parliament met, the press was snubbed, and a homily was read on "statesmanship." Lord Derby positively assured the nation that M. Bonaparte was animated by the friendliest feelings, and Lord John Russell felt convinced that all had been done with the purest motives and the best intentions. The House of Commons cheered, and plunged into the great "mutton-chop" debate, with as much indifference to Louis Napoleon as if he were still a prisoner at Ham, or a lodger in Adam-street, Adelphi.

In 1848, the Republic having driven the army out of Paris, the Whigs imagined that it would come here. They endeavoured to persuade us that 150,000 militiamen were indispensable to enable us to beat it off. Those militiamen were *not* raised—the French army did *not* come—but the National Guards and the contributors to the Exhibition *did*.

In 1852, Lord John Russell has logically followed up his panegyric of M. Bonaparte by again proposing a militia. Unlike *Falstaff's* men in buckram, they grew fewer in the counting, and 120,000 were enough. Lord John, however, would have none but "men of spirit," "independent" patriots who were above a "bounty," and drilled for the "love of country." These admirable qualities were ripe, he conceived, at the age of from 20 to 21, but during the first militia year might last to that of 23. Lord John correctly modelled his array on the old constitutional "watch," which scrupulously respected the parish boundary. and called, though he did not exactly make, his militia "local"—Lord Palmerston proposed, and the majority agreed, to christen the force "general"—Lord John threw up

the bill and office too—and the Protectionists came into both. The "protection" that they cannot get for corn they insist on extending to our persons, and Lord Derby undertakes to "insure" us against invaders and invasions, by the help of 80,000 men, at the cost of a million and a half.

It is natural that the fathers of the "Bills" should dwell with fond parental pride on the transcendent qualities of their respective bantlings. Mr. Walpole points to the revolting feature of "the ballot" in Lord John's; and Lord John retorts on the mercenary character of Mr. Walpole's "ragamuffins," who may take both the bounty and their passage to Arkansas, or serve for twenty-one days and spend their pay in the beer-shops.

They who cry for a repeal of the taxes on knowledge, for a reduction of those on carriages or tea, on claret or on malt, the hungry student or the thirsty labourer, the thrifty housewife or the private gentleman, will be gratified to find that the paltry half-million which would just accommodate their wants or tastes, will disappear as a "bounty." The "bounty" to the fortunate militiaman may reach 6*l.* for 105 days' drill—that to the soldier for ten years' service amounts to eight shillings, after payment for his kit. Major Beresford explains this apparent anomaly by remarking, that short work costs more than long. The formula would admit of being put into a pleasant rule of three. If "service" for ten years be worth eight shillings and drill for nine weeks 6*l.*, what would be the price of one week's "engagement?" The answer must be left to Major Beresford or the Calculating Boy.

If the bounty fails, Mr. Walpole has the ballot in reserve. After the 1st of January next, the missing militiamen may be drawn from the farmers, tradespeople, mechanics, or gentlemen



who have the good fortune to be aged from 18 to 35, and who will leave their "ingle," their shop, or their drawing-room, to hob-a-nob under tents for three weeks at a time with the "rag-amuffins" at a penny a day. By this delightful arrangement, married men, as Lord John feelingly observed, "without any proper spirit," may be plucked from "the way of life in which they are skilled," and exchange the domestic cat for the drummer's.

Those who heard or read his Lordship's eloquent description of the 120,000 spirited young fellows that his ballot would have drawn for the pride and protection of their country, must have felt a shock at his subsequent depreciation of them. In his reply to Mr. Walpole, he confessed that he should prefer an "embodied" militia of 10,000 men to 120,000 by ballot or 80,000 by bounty. It would be difficult to draw a very marked distinction between these 10,000 incorporated irregulars and the same number of regulars. Be that as it may, never was the comparison between mind and matter less to the advantage of the former, one "embodied" man being more than equal to twelve "men of spirit."

It is curious to inquire, and instructive to discover, what motives have induced our statesmen and legislators to vote a Militia Bill at all. There must, of course, be some imperative necessity to excuse a measure which consumes a million and a half of money—debauches the industrial habits of the people—proclaims national weakness—awakens foreign jealousy—postpones indefinitely the disarmament of Europe—and contains, perhaps, the germs of war.

It might appear to a superficial observer, that Louis Napoleon is the cause of it. The coincidence of the *coup d'état* and of the

Bill is striking, but accidental. The two have no more to do with each other than Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands. Lord John Russell and Lord Derby are both satisfied with M. Bonaparte, and Mr. Walpole expressly declares that "our friendly relations" with him "have increased and are increasing." This, he justly argues, is the very reason for the measure. If we were not on very excellent terms, M. Bonaparte might take exception to our armament; but how can he quarrel with a friendly force? The militia is a household corps, a sort of *Dî Penates*. A Jesuitical opponent might urge that 80,000 half-bred soldiers would act as a reserve for real ones, and, taking their place in garrisons at home, would recruit as well as liberate regular troops for a campaign. It might have been expected that French politeness would eschew so unhandsome an insinuation. Unfortunately, such is not the case. The main reason urged by the Minister of War for increasing the effective of the army of France, is the militia we are contemplating.

Captain Boldero offers a valuable although alarming suggestion. We cannot always count on so desirable a neighbour as Louis Napoleon. Twelve months may bring a new Dictator of less gentle disposition, a less peaceful turn, and less amicable towards "perfidious Albion." Major Beresford partially agrees with Capt. Boldero. With Louis Napoleon we are safe enough; but if, unhappily, we were deprived of *him*, we should then be exposed to the fury of "those elements of anarchy and confusion," which, from 1848 to the moment of the *coup d'état*, rendered our relations with France so critical. Who can look back without a shudder on the *quasi* invasions of National Guards and the horrors of the Exhibition?

Major Beresford judiciously disabuses us of the absurd and

dangerous notion that peace is the period for disarming. Peace is the time to be afraid of war, the right moment to prepare for it. In peace, we can arm at leisure. Admirable as the doctrine is, candour must deny to it originality. It is a parody of the formula for carrying an umbrella. The fool takes one only on a rainy day—the wise man on a fine one. Querulous disputants may, perhaps, object, that if we are not to disarm in peace, and cannot disarm in war, we shall never disarm at all.

Mr. Walpole quotes, with enthusiastic approbation, Burke's apostrophe in favour of "early fear." He thinks that there is nothing like it. We cannot be too much or too soon afraid. Philosophers are wont to argue against panic, and inculcate courage, reason, and judgment. Mr. Walpole seems to hold that discretion is not only the better part of valour, but the whole of it. In his opinion, Bob Acres, not St. George, should be the Champion of England; and he differs *toto cælo* from that captain of "the Calais packet," who, when asked by a very nervous lady whether there was "any fear," comforted her with the assurance, "Plenty of fear, ma'am, but not the slightest danger."

Mr. Disraeli, despising the simple arguments of Secretaries of War and State, has delivered himself of a portentous oracle. He proclaimed from the ministerial tripos to the awe-struck house: "A militia is required because the weakest powers have the strongest places, and the poorest sovereigns have the richest countries." This astounding dictum is no doubt all the more irresistible because it is incomprehensible. It is a fragment, perhaps, of that "Asian mystery" which it is Mr. Disraeli's mission to unfold. Gibraltar, Malta, Ehrenbreitstein, Cherbourg, are "the strongest places" that we know of, and belong to the weakest powers of Europe—England, Prussia, France. France, again, and

England are notoriously the "richest countries," and our gracious Queen is little better than a pauper, while Louis Napoleon is the last edition of "the Man of Ross," who

"Of rates and taxes, wife and children clear,  
Possesses just five hundred pounds a-year."

We are urged to vote for a militia because we shall *not* easily get rid of it. If 10,000 men are added to the army now, the "economists" may persuade us to disband the supplementary battalions when there seems no further need of them. This frightful contingency was dwelt on by Lord Palmerston, caught up by other honourable alarmists, and told very properly upon the House. The popular idea of an invasion is altogether an erroneous one. It by no means implies any known invader, or any tangible force, but it is a sort of chronic danger in the air, liable to come upon us like a blight, from no particular quarter, and without the slightest notice. Against such a subtle enemy a militia is obviously our sole defence. Being "called out" for only three weeks in the year, it is just the thing for an emergency. We rival the prudence and economy of the man who purchases and puts on a pea coat in July, to defend him from a snow-storm which Murphy tells him *may* arrive at Christmas.

Those who are so obdurate as not to be convinced by this powerful ratiocination, are assured that it is, at all events, "a step in the right direction." If this is only "a step," what will our future march be? The "step" in question is the "goose-step," and the "direction" that taken by the sheep of Panurgus, who jumped into the sea because he tumbled in.

Such are the arguments for the establishment of a militia, addressed by its promoters to the British nation. What man of probity and common sense can fail to be struck by their suicidal

absurdities and inconsistencies? Born in insincerity, and sustained on false pretences, the Bill carries with it the indelible stigma of its origin :

*Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

Should it pass to the limbo of abortive legislation, already so stocked with parliamentary follies, its preamble should be worded by its authors thus:—

“Considering that we are at peace with Europe and America ; that the interests and inclinations of the people of France are identified with those of the people of England ; that ‘our friendly relations’ with Louis Napoleon have increased and are increasing ; that it is the duty of a Government to foster morality, lighten taxation, and remit, as far as possible, the burdens on intelligence and industry ; be it enacted that a million and a half of money, wrung from the income and the labour of the nation, be appropriated to bribe some thousands of bad citizens to become worse soldiers, the better to encourage idleness and jobbery, and perpetuate national hatreds.”

June 1.

## LETTER VIII.

## PEACE AT ALL PRICE.\*

OF late we had heard little of the Peace Society. Those who have faith in common sense imagined that it had achieved its highest triumph, and stormed even that citadel of philanthropical absurdity. They were mistaken. The towns of Great Britain find, to their astonishment, that they are "exploited" by the Society's sections, each of which appropriates its own. This *quasi* resurrection of "the three tailors of Tooley Street" is led by Elihu Burritt, who, as one of "the great Anglo-Saxon race," represents the people of England. He is now in Paris, the plenipotentiary, it would seem, of the Society and us.

In this imposing capacity, Mr. Burritt announces, in the Bonapartist *Pays*, that he bears fraternal missives from the cities of Britain to those of France. They pair off in more than forty couples in the country dance. Elihu Burritt is the Simpson for the nonce, and introduces with a grace worthy of the Petronius of Vauxhall. London "sets" to Paris; Chelmsford bows to Rouen; Edinburgh and Glasgow, Dublin and the rest, "hands round" with their several partners. The grotesque Roger de Coverley recalls the dream of the bold dragoon in Washington

\* *Times*, September 27, 1852.

Irving's story. At that witching hour when churchyards yawn, the furniture of the warrior's bedroom played the same freak as the towns of France and England. The chest of drawers led out the old arm-chair, the tongs curtsied to the shovel, and "a weazen-faced fellow," the prototype of Mr. Burritt, made "asthmatical music" with the bellows.

Yet there is malice in the drollery. While these most pacific of municipalities amorously flirt with those of France, they protest against "the irritating language" of the press, and insinuate that it fans national antipathies, thwarts commercial intercourse, and endangers peace.

If prophets were honoured in their own country, Mr. Burritt might, perhaps, be of use at home. While he preaches peace at all price here, doctrines are promulgated in America fatal to peace and morality too. For justice they substitute popular cupidity; for the rights of other States, the interests of the Republic; for their independence, annexation. Cuba shall be hers, for it will be her Italy; the Society Islands, for they are commercial posts; the Lobos Islands, for they teem with guano; our fisheries, for they are better than her own; Mexico and Canada, for she desires them. "America for the Americans," is the cry, and the map is the law of nations. The policy of a mighty people is the code of the buccaniers—

"That they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can."

Is this the country of Washington and Franklin? Are these the institutions that proclaim the rights of man? The rights of man are the rights of American citizens only; the institutions a new political faith of Islam.

We shall witness, we are told, a fierce republican propa-

gandism. There is one more certain and a thousand times more glorious than that of the rifle and revolver. It is the propagandism of noble principles nobly practised—of equal rights and laws—of justice cheaply, quickly, and impartially dispensed—of monopolies and privileges cancelled—of education for man's mind, freedom for his person, his industry, and conscience—of government by all for the good of all, not for the ambitious lusts of a few or one—of a moral sense which condemns alike political and private vice—of a national pride which sets honour over profit—and of a great example. This is the propagandism which no policy can circumvent, no power resist, and no morality decry. It is the propagandism which comes from Heaven, and which blesses earth. It is the propagandism of institutions which foster the domestic, but do not emasculate the manly virtues—which abolish war, not by stocking the world with bondsmen, but by linking men's interests, ennobling their intelligence, and proving the happiness of freedom. Let this be the propagandism of the United States, and the days of tyranny are numbered. Let civilization be convinced that liberty is not license, democracy neither piracy, communism, nor repudiation, and the nations of the earth will become one vast Amphictyonic union of industry and peace. Such are the doctrines which the Society may charter, Elihu Burritt preach, and America righteously practise.

The language of the press is "irritating." To France? Impossible! It cannot be irritating to a generous nation to deplore her wrongs, to sympathise with the proscription of her most illustrious sons, to execrate the bastard reproduction of an Empire which shed torrents of her blood, banded Europe against her in hate and arms, cost her Waterloo, and quartered the Cossacks upon Paris. Has the press proclaimed a crusade or



coalition against her rights or her? Has it once whispered aggressive war? Has it counselled more than legitimate defence against too probable ambition?

Is it M. Bonaparte that the press "irritates?" No doubt. But are the *coup d'état*, its atrocities and consequences—the strangling of liberty, the consummation of a military despotism, the audacity of the Society of Jesus, and the deification of force—historical realities, or not? If not, do more than tell the press it lies; convict it. If so, assert at once that the press has no business with either morality or fact. Be consistent. If the press may not denounce the foulest guilt abroad, deprive it of the right of exposing political or moral sin at home. May it anathematize Castlereagh or Sidmouth, condemn Palmerston, even hunt down Peel, and must it hold its "bated breath" before M. Bonaparte? Is the freedom of the press to take no heed of vice or virtue, good or evil; but idolize success and the accomplished fact, and proclaim, with Machiavelli, Cæsar Borgia the model of a prince? Is this the gospel of the Peace Society? It is the cant and creed of hypocrites and slaves.

You concede, perhaps, to the press its right, but demand that it be waived in presence of the interests of England. Was that your language to the West Indian planters? Is that your tone to Virginia and New Orleans? Was it so that Wilberforce pleaded, that Henry Brougham declaimed? *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*, is the abolitionist motto. Are your sympathies only for another hemisphere and for sooty skins? Is England to enforce at any price the liberty of savages and cannibals, and may not her press give utterance to an indignant cry at its treacherous massacre in France? Is this the logic either of the heart or head?

It is not so certain that silence *would* serve the interests of

England. Our greatness has grown and will die with our freedom. Personal liberty brings individual energy, and that makes Britain what she is. A nation is but an assemblage of units, and in a free State that unit is a man. Individual liberty, pushed even to license, makes young America a giant; individual constraint has reduced the vast empire of Charles V. to a decrepit dwarf. The history of the past and present reads but the same lesson. It is not the institutions, but the spirit of a people, that protect its liberty or sustain its greatness. Let Englishmen be taught to excuse treason, perjury, and tyranny abroad, and you educate them to tolerate those crimes at home. No man can say how soon the love of liberty may be invoked to defend our hearths and Constitution. Would you castrate the spirit of independence, and debase your free battalions to a guard of mutes?

The press is taunted with menacing the peace of Europe. Hitherto it has preserved it. The press did not strike the *coup d'état*—intoxicate Prætorians with donatives and with flattery—address the army as the *élite* of France—ply it with appeals to vengeance and to Waterloo—restore the eagles of the Empire—ape its traditions and its insolence—blasphemously adore the “Great” Napoleon and the “Little” as “the elect of God”—let the Jesuits loose on “Liberalism”—bully Belgium—hem in Switzerland—point to the frontier of the Rhine—calculate openly the method and the chances of invading England. It is not fear of the press that has united the constitutional Leopold with the absolute powers of the north—that has made those autocracies distrust the traitor whose treason they half approve—that has brought our ships into the Channel—that has braved the cost, odium, and ridicule of a militia—that is arming and watching the southern sea-board. The peace of Europe is men-

aced, but it is not by the press. The danger lies in the disorderly ambition and fatal necessities of one man—in the frantic passions and gambling ventures of the “Ratapoils” and “Cas-majous” who have seized on France—in a peasantry blinded by brutal ignorance, gulled by the priests, and gendarmed by the prefects—in half a million men-at-arms who have learnt the deadly secret of their power, and will tolerate no Government, obey no laws, that will not rule for them—and in the servile lessons and lunatic supineness preached by the Peace Society.

The press does not create the danger, but contracts by baring it. The *coup d'état* was perpetrated, like a burglary, by night. It is the duty of the press to see that the blow of invasion or of conquest does not smite Europe in its sleep. This duty it performs, and for this it is calumniated. It affronts a reckless despotism—subjects itself to exclusion from France, its correspondents to expulsion—risks its interests—is denounced abroad—is abused at home—and, from *gaieté de cœur*, suicidal frenzy, or devilish spite, it invites taxation and infamy upon itself, the horrors of war upon the world! No! The press is the advanced guard of civilization. It descried the approach of another Attila, and, taking counsel only of its courage and its conscience, it charged in Liberty's name Liberty's barbarian foe.

Every thinking man loathes war. Reason arraigns, religion condemns, humanity shudders at it. History, the map of Europe in her hand, inquires the profit of so many murderous fights by land and sea, of millions squandered, blood spilt like water, man pitted against man, like beasts in the arena, for a statesman's place or for a despot's lust; bitter experience counts the cost of “glory,” and sets against the green gazette of victory the black one of insolvent taxpayers; the progress of intelligence marches over prostrate animosities and prejudices; and, most of

all, free trade, uniting nations by their mutual interests and wants, brings in her train no bloody memories, no savage vain regrets, but peace, happiness, and plenty. Peace, then, between the "peoples" is possible, perhaps their inevitable future; but peace between antagonistic principles is a madman's dream. Liberty and tyranny are face to face. The struggle has been deadly for more than half a century. Is it ended now? *Credat Judæus*. Look on France, Italy, Germany, Spain, to the east and to the west, to the Old World and the New, and believe it, believers in the peace millennium!

You welcome, or, at least, would not repel, the Cossack, the Croat, the Chasseur de Vincennes. It is a libel, you say, on those generous legions to pretend that they could march beneath their countries' flags, plunder in the van, the knout and the drum-head court-martial in the rear, to assault our innocence and wealth. Be it so. Preach the New Jerusalem, but practise it. What! You scout the supposition of foreign war, and wage a civil one. You ridicule the notion of an enemy, and admit that a countryman—an "Anglo-Saxon"—dressed in a smock-frock, corduroys, and high-lows, crape upon his face, a horse-pistol in his hand, may break into your chamber in the dead of night, hoarsely demand your plate or life, and, with his grip upon your throat, swear with a ruffian's oath if you but move to blow your brains out. Your cosmopolite benevolence repudiates the possibility of an invader, and you lift or hire the fratricidal hand against your burglarious brother. Do not halt half way in generosity. Carry out your glorious principle. Embrace the whole human family. Down with the police, away with the criminal courts and judges, unbar your doors, take the shutters from your windows, throw open the till and the strong box, unbutton your breeches-pockets, remove the watch from the impracticable fob

and let the chain dangle from the confiding coat-tail, suspend your purses from the park trees, and restore the good old days of Alfred, with this trifling difference—*he* hung the cut-throats ; *you* invite them.

It would be ill for England and the world if the spirit of the Peace Society prevailed among the people. Its prophets and its proselytes may kiss the hangman and the rod, but their abject doctrines and their servile instincts are not owned by that Anglo-Saxon race to which they affectedly appeal. The *Charivari* and the intelligence of France may laugh at Mr. Burritt and his mission.

Faith has its fanatics, fanaticism has its madmen. No philosophic plummet has yet touched the bottom of human gullibility. From Vishnu to Joe Smith, from the Cow of Bramah to the Peace Society, the traditions of delusion are unbroken. The millennium has been imminent for eighteen hundred years. The zealots who dispute the right of self-defence, though too ridiculous to be important, are too impertinent to be unnoticed. They are only out of Bedlam because "moral madness" is not yet pronounced a conclusive qualification for it, and because, though it were, it would *not* be worth the while of either the nation or their friends to incur the cost of their confinement.

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In reply to the preceding Letter, the *Times* contained this note :—

*To the Editor of the Times.*

SIR,—Your correspondent, "An Englishman," needs correction. He has made a most elaborate attack upon "the Peace

Society" in reference to a movement for which it is no more responsible than "An Englishman" himself.

If so able and influential a writer felt himself called on to attack "the Peace Society," it was certainly due to a body of men who are striving at any rate with a noble and worthy aim, that he should make sufficient inquiry into the facts of the case to blend justice with severity.

The Peace Society have had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Burritt's visit to France, or with the preparation of the friendly addresses of which he is the bearer; and of the six towns which "An Englishman" names, he is wrong in two—Manchester and Cheltenham—from which no addresses were forwarded.

It is just possible that the superficial knowledge of this movement which has led "An Englishman" so completely to misunderstand the source of its origin, may have led to equal misconception of its real spirit and *animus*.

EDMUND FRY, Secretary.

League of Brotherhood, 35, Broad-street-buildings, Sept. 27.

Mr. Edmund Fry has taken exception to the connection of Mr. Burritt's mission with the "Peace Society."

Cards on table.

At the latter end of August or beginning of September, the *Charivari* contained a *jeu d'esprit* on this international courtship. Soon afterwards, the Continental Press announced to its readers and to Europe, that—

"Mr. Burritt had arrived in Paris, the bearer of addresses from most of the principal towns of England to France and her *administration*—that he had written on the subject to the Bonapartist *Pays*—that the address of London was signed by several Members of Parliament, the secretaries of several societies, and more than 1500 honourable metropolitans—that the address of

Edinburgh was subscribed by the Lord Mayor, many magistrates and counsellors, and a great number of its principal inhabitants—that the address of Glasgow had also a Lord Mayor, numerous M.P.'s, magistrates, counsellors, and 1800 influential citizens—that the address of Dublin could boast of the signature of *its* Lord Mayor and other eminent persons—that forty more great towns of Britain addressed as many great towns of France—that the signatures were those of all classes, occupations, and professions—and, finally, that the aim of the addresses was a protest against the irritating language of the Press, and the tightening of the bonds of friendship and good fellowship."

Mr. Fry assures us that this is altogether independent of the "Peace Society;" and Mr. Fry, like Brutus, is an honourable man. Be there then

"Six Richmonds in the field?"

At the conferences and congresses, foreign and domestic, of the real Peace Society, Elihu Burritt was a "star." He proposed its resolutions, stirred its auditory, and represented Transatlantic philanthropy and eloquence. Drab-coloured men were unmistakeably moved, and their gentle partners were demurely agitated. But this, it seems, is a tradition, and Mr. Burritt and the Society are twain. So says Mr. Fry; and Mr. Fry is an honourable man.

And the three Lord Mayors—that whole division of M.P.'s—those Secretaries (minus Mr. Fry) of the Societies, "Druids," "Odd Fellows," and "Hearts of Oak"—that quorum of "the great Unpaid"—that multitude of counsellors, in which, as we are told, is wisdom—those 1500 celebrities of London—that host of illustrations of the Modern Athens—those 1800 influences of Glasgow—that green constellation of the eminences of Dublin—

and those forty more great towns to boot, have nothing to say to the Peace Society!

But if this Homeric catalogue of men and cities, this Quixotic mission, these peace addresses, this municipal and parliamentary, public and individual absurdity, officiousness, and folly, are *not* the Society, what is? Who and where is the real Simon Pure?

Is it he who assures us that French officers and soldiers are "too gentlemanly" to invade us?—who pooh-poohs at Marylebone Sir Charles Napier, and the idea of a descent upon the coast?—who inquires at the London Tavern, what motive could possibly incite a Bonaparte to steal a march on London?—who indicates the inutility of sending ships of war to protect fisheries from American citizens like Mr. Jewett, who live only to respect morality, treaties, and the rights of men?—and finally, who—the Militia Bill being a *law*, and claiming, as such, the allegiance of good citizens—exaggerates its evils, calumniates its objects, obstructs its operation, and traduces its recruits?

Mr. Edmund Fry declares that my acquaintance with the Peace Society is "superficial." Very likely. I know it only as the public knows it, from its speeches in the newspapers, its resolutions on the platform, its acts, addresses, inconsistencies, extravagances, and utopianism. This is its corporate life, patent, intelligible, questionable, and ridiculous. Is it nothing but a myth, a subtle allegory, a philanthropic Thuggism comprehended only by adepts? Would Mr. Fry entice me to the fate of Pentheus, who, prying too closely into the mysteries of Bacchus, was smitten with a frenzy and saw double?

I improperly nominated Cheltenham for Chelmsford, and enlisted erroneously the absent Manchester. How shall I apologise?—to Chelmsford for having robbed it of an honour? to Cheltenham for having put on it an affront? And Manchester!



the metropolis of progress, the pacific and political, if not the geographical capital of "South Saxony," excluded from the movement and pacific glories of three other capitals and forty towns! I can only exclaim with the Dominie, "Prodigious!"

Mr. Fry deprecates, in a reproachful tone, "an attack on men who are striving, at any rate, with a noble and a worthy aim." I believe it. I believe that the Peace Society springs from a sincere although a false benevolence. Malignity itself is unable to deny it good intentions. But *they* are not enough. Good intentions may carry a man to the Bench—his wife and children to the workhouse. Unless guided by good sense, they may become a curse. There is a time for all things, and this is *not* the time for the Society. The storm that is now careering over Europe, is too wild for its crank bark. That must be hauled up into dry dock, to refit for summer seas.

Nor do I own to "unjust severity." There is an interlocutor more searching and more severe than Mr. Fry—my conscience. If that did not fully and honourably acquit me—if it did not absolve both the motive and the act—

"I'd break my pipe, and never whistle mair."

## LETTER IX.\*

## THE EMPIRE.

THE curtain is rising on a second "Empire." The decorations are prepared, the machinery constructed, the *mise en scène* arranged, and parts allotted; but no man, not even the hero of the piece, can forecast its termination. Tragedy or comedy, melodrama or pantomime, its action and *dénouement* are unknown alike to France that must perform, and Europe that must suffer it. Our curiosity is goaded by our interests, and we interrogate the past and watch the present, to divine—perhaps disarm—the future.

The history of tyrants is not seldom that of early promise cruelly belied, of plausible professions scandalously violated, of a nation's confidencee volunteered in smiles, and recalled in tears and blood. Tiberius, then ten years old, won the admiration of the Roman world by his filial piety and funeral oration on his parent; when he assumed the purple,† he aspired, he said, to no

\* *Times*, November 2, 1852.

† The classical reader knows that Tiberius did *not* assume the purple. That and the diadem were imported from the East in a still more degenerate age. What Tiberius *did* assume was the lictors of the tyrant and dissimulation of the Jesuit.

higher title than that of "Father of the Citizens." Nero declined the felicitations of the senate, modestly begged the conscript sycophants to "reserve their praises until he had deserved them," and when asked to sign the writ for the execution of some malefactors, "wished to heaven that he could not write." Napoleon Bonaparte, to "save society," bayoneted, in the name of "Liberty and Equality," the national representation; made himself First Consul to guarantee "stability;" announced that the revolution was "concluded;" and protested to the world that peace was the first necessity of nations, and their highest glory. The Empire and its hecatombs are the commentary upon "peace;"—Fontainebleau, Elba, St. Helena, the Restoration, the days of July, those of February and December, are the bitter gloss upon "stability." The imitations of the nephew are, of course, literal. He also has "saved society," guarantees "stability," struck the *coup d'état* in the name of "the Republic," elected himself President for 10 years, to close the "era of revolutions," within 10 months commands the cry of *Vive l'Empereur!* and professes the mission of "peace."

The word of Louis Napoleon is too inviolable to admit of doubt, and, fortunately for the probabilities of peace, he has not yet sworn to abstain from war. But necessity and circumstance have both their logic, and neither endorses his professions nor our belief. The Imperial policy must not be sought in claptrap answers to adoring prefects or blaspheming mayors, but in the instincts of a nature, the antecedents of a life, the passions of the man, and the laws of his position.

"I represent," he said to the Chamber of Peers, "a principle, a cause, and a defeat. The principle is the sovereignty of the

people, the cause is the Empire, the defeat is Waterloo. That principle you have recognised, that cause you have served, and that defeat you would avenge. No difference exists between you and me."

The "sovereignty of the people," of the Bonapartist pattern, reigns; the Empire is an accomplished fact; Waterloo is yet to be avenged. That vengeance was promised in the proclamation to the troops on the 2nd of December; it is fiercely debated in the messroom and canteen; "Ratapoil" colonels remind the soldier that Marshals of France started from the hut; doggerel rhymes on perfidious Albion circulate in the faubourgs and the barracks; the Ultramontanes curse the heresy of England, subscribe their sous to persecuted Ireland, and preach a holy war; and the *Constitutionnel*, licensed by the Government, deprecates the calamities, insinuates the need, and demonstrates the facility of an invasion.

Louis Napoleon is lavish of assurances. "I say, the Empire is peace, for France desires it, and when France is satisfied, the world is tranquil."

The Empire is peace! What are its credentials, where its guarantees? Are they to be sought in the *coup d'état*, in a Prætorian camp, in Algerian regiments, in a Roman garrison, in half a million soldiers? Do we see them in the new fortifications of Toulon; in the busy dockyards; in the construction of the Napoléon, the Jean Bart, and the Austerlitz; in the prophecy of the Minister of Marine that vessels such as those will "decide the destiny of nations;" in the declaration of Louis Napoleon that "the Mediterranean *should* be a French lake?" Or, is it in Belgium we shall find them? In the war of tariffs, threatened by Cassagnac, repudiated by Louis Napoleon, and

carried out by him; in the Bonapartist propagandism within, the concentration of troops without; in the placards of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" posted on the walls of Brussels; in the *ultimatum* of the Elysée against the freedom of its press; in the law proposed by its abject Government to hand over people, press, and constitution to the charge of M. de Maupas; in the treason of its Jesuits; in their surreptitious petitions for annexation to France; in the dislocation of its Ministry; in the distraction of its counsels? We are told of strategy, and of intrenched lines. But no strategy is proof against suborned disloyalty, and scarp and ravelin, parapet and fosse, are powerless to exclude domestic treachery. The works of Vauban have been mined by Loyola.

"The Empire," says Louis Napoleon, "is peace, for Louis XV. and Louis XVI. inherited not the wars, but glory of the *Grand Monarque*." His glory! Louis XV.'s was the Petit Trianon and the Parc aux Cerfs—Louis XVI.'s a revolution and the scaffold. Which shall it be? These comparisons are idle. These parallels are false. The present cannot subsist upon the past. Governments, like individuals, have their proper life. What is born of violence must live by force. However Bonapartism may gasconade, the Republic is not dead, nor Henry V., nor the Count of Paris. Principles and claims, though prostrate, breathe. They wait only circumstance and opportunity to renew the combat and unfurl their flag. Can Imperialism conciliate rights that it denies, or satisfy factions that it tramples on? Can it crush liberty and disarm too?

The dupes, the organs, and accomplices of Bonapartism are, or affect to be, in transports. Peace is assured, and Europe may disband, for Louis Napoleon has declared it. Germany, they write, must regret her levies; England must repent of her

militia. After the conspiracy of Strasbourg, Louis Philippe trusted the plighted honour of a Bonaparte, and was repaid by the expedition of Boulogne, and the spoliation of his children. France confided in a Princely word, and she is now enslaved. The Legislative Assembly credited his oaths, and it met with a malefactor's fate. Honour and oath are only counters in the game, shifted with the chances of the cards.

His professions jump with the occasion. To the army they are all eagles and glory, "common" misfortunes, and revenge; to the merchants of Bordeaux the conquests are merely of marshes and morality, Christianity and comfort; to the Chamber of Peers he protested that his uncle had "preferred abdication to acceptance of restricted frontiers," and that "he had never for one instant breathed in forgetfulness of that great lesson."

The peace which Louis Napoleon proclaims is Napoleonian. It is of the same stamp as that "sovereignty of the people" he has now restored. The "first" Emperor proclaimed it too, and always most loudly before each fresh spoliation. The herald\* of the "third" explains it. "The wars of the Empire were always provoked and always defensive. Even the Russian campaign was forced upon him!" It is a calumny to charge him with lust of conquest or ambition: "he was only too good, too great, and too magnanimous!" The peace of the uncle fertilized with blood the battle-fields of Europe—that of the nephew has hitherto manured the Boulevard only, and the Champ de Mars. The world retains too fresh a memory of the goodness, magnanimity, and greatness of the one not to feel a wise affright at their imitation by the other.

France is satisfied! Louis Napoleon, the *Moniteur*, the

\* *Du Rétablissement de l'Empire.*

salaried press, the Jesuits, the functionaries, and the police affirm it. France is more than satisfied, she is delirious with delight at the massacre of Paris, the proscription of her "illustrations," the deportation of her citizens, the destruction of her liberties, at the gag upon her lips and strait-waistcoat on her limbs, at the spy by her side, and the gendarme at her heels, at the vote a sham and the sabre a fact, the police, the *ponton*, and the prison.

What is true of the whole is true of the part, and if France is satisfied, the press and the opinions that it represents are so. More than half a hundred of its members are no more. Some were strangled on the 2nd of December—the rest have been choked by the "*avertissements*" of the police. Of the survivors, the once independent few are terrified to silence, or, what is worse, to hypocritical subserviency. The eye of the Government is rivetted upon their page, its hand upon their property and their future seems only the desperate choice of a lingering atrophy or public execution. Not only does a sacred inviolability hedge the whole *personnel* of power, from Louis Napoleon to the beadle, but the *writers* in its pay may neither be criticised nor laughed at. The *Presse* has received one of its *avertissements* for daring to discuss a question with the *Pays*, and the *Charivari* a reprimand for want of respect to Laguëronière.

Sure as the dissolution of journalism is, it would seem to be too slow for M. Bonaparte, and rumour has bruited more than once a fresh *coup d'état* against the press. Napoleon I. abolished all journals but the *Moniteur*, and Napoleon III. may do the same. The "ideologues" that both have affected to despise, and, in reality, have feared, would fall with greater dignity by the stroke of a decree, than beneath the marasmus of enforced inanity or baseness.

The France of the functionaries and the church is satisfied. In conjunction with the "*élite* of the nation," they find themselves the Corinthian pillars of that "society" which has been "saved." The wages of the Prefects have been liberally raised, independence chased, and obsequiousness or unscrupulous audacity promoted. New powers, perquisites, and privileges have been accorded to them; crosses and circulars have rained upon them; and the Prefecture has swelled into a pashalic. But the tenure of the office is discreet obedience; and whilst a blunder is a crime, hesitation is disgrace. More than one prefectorial *razzia* has taught this salutary lesson.

The Jesuits and the Ultramontanes are drunk with exultation. The sacerdotal heel is on the neck of France—the garrotte prepared for Europe. The Holy Roman Apostolic Church dreams once more of universal empire. Before or behind its ecstatic obscurantism six centuries vanish, and the 19th, which we falsely believed this to be, is only really the 13th. The *Univers* laments that Luther was not burnt, and sanctifies the Inquisition; Donoso Cortez denounces reason as a damnable impertinence; abbés and bishops aroynt the classics, anathematize Cicero and Virgil, and prescribe for the education of youth the study of the "Fathers," the breviary and paternoster; Frère Léotade and the Curé Gothland are on the road to canonization; and the land teems with miracles. Winking Madonnas, sweating saints, bleeding altarpieces, and inspired cowboys; the gendarme who deposes to the pious lie, and the sub-prefect who endorses it; episcopal charges, archiepiscopal pastorals, and Papal rescripts, all testify alike that the favour of Heaven has fallen on the Jesuits, that Louis Napoleon is the "chosen of the Lord," and that "society is saved."

When the early Christians were smeared with pitch, and



burnt for torches, flayed, crucified with their heads downwards, and cast to the lions of the amphitheatre,

“To make a Roman holyday,”

they were butchered as “the enemies of human kind,” in the name and behalf of “society” menaced, civilization outraged, and the gods avenged.

When Simon de Montfort led against the Albigenses the “holy commission” of Innocent III., and the Inquisition sprang like a scorpion from the fire, the Reformers were a holocaust on the altar of “society.” For its eternal interests, they were hunted like wild beasts and destroyed like vermin, speared, disembowelled, chopped in pieces, crushed by millstones, sawed asunder, massacred with those obscene atrocities which fiends alone would seem able to conceive, and the “defenders of society” to compass. The maturity of the Holy-office kept the promise of its birth, and the tortures of its dungeons, and flames of its *auto-da-fés* still racked the joints and scorched the bodies of its victims, to the priestly *Ca ira* of the glory of God and present and future salvation of man. This is the institution which the *Univers* laments, and the Jesuits would assuredly restore.

Prefect and priest vie in blasphemous servility. Louis Napoleon had long ranked as the official “Providence.” The sacrilegious title had become stale. The Prefect of Perigueux displayed in a transparency the likeness of his master, with the inscription beneath it,—“*Dieu fit Napoléon et se repose!*”

The Bishop of Châlons informs the faithful that Louis Napoleon is “The Man of God.” Mayors and prelates salute “The Messenger of Heaven.” The Baptist naturally makes

way for "The Messiah." The second person of the Trinity ushers in the First, and the flood of profane flattery mounts to the Most High,

" 'A present Deity,' they shout around,  
 'A present Deity,' the vaulted roofs rebound.  
 With ravished ears,  
 The monarch hears,  
 Assumes the God,  
 Affects to nod,  
 And seems to shake the spheres."

The Lord's Prayer is parodied, the Creed travestied, Gencsis burlesqued; and dignitaries listen without a blush while France is made to supplicate this "Father" for its daily bread, and gabble its belief in his divinity. The episcopacy cannot reproach its conscience with so much blasphemy for nothing. Gratuitous infamy is not a Jesuit vice. Louis Napoleon scrupulously practises his religious duties. Like our third Richard, he devotes his leisure to the Book of Prayer and to a brace of bishops. Such meditations fructify; piety and policy go hand in hand; and he has raised the salaries of the holy men. Oh! mitred hypocrisy, whose impious cynicism mocks alike the chastisement of Heaven and the scorn of earth, what deepest pit hath Lucifer in store for *thee*?

Jesuitism plays the desperate game of double or quits with reason. After the revolution of February, Catholic priests blessed the trees of liberty. After the *coup d'état*, they chanted a *Te Deum* on its massacre. They sanctified legitimacy until it fell; they consecrate perjury when it has triumphed. Ministers of Christ, they burlesque Christianity; teachers of morality, they deify crime. They have learnt and forgotten nothing.

For them Hildebrand may still thunder in the Vatican; the Inquisition is an incomplete experiment; the Reformation is a heresy, and not a lesson; and the war on civilization must be recommenced. Their black conspiracy against intelligence envelopes Europe, its staff in Rome, its file everywhere. In Italy its banner is "the Pope;" in France, "Society!" in Ireland, "Religious Equality!" The equality which triumphant Jesuitism would dispense is that of persecution and damnation.

France is satisfied! She utters but a single cry, and that is "*Vive l'Empereur!*" What Emperor? Napoleon the Third? Soultouque the Second? Neither. Punch the First! The Empire we shall see will be that of the hero of the streets,—who cudgels everybody,—bilks his creditors,—slips the hangman's neck into the noose which justice knotted for his own,—and after a noisy and impudent performance of tricks, blasphemies, and blows, is carried off by the Devil.

That stereotyped "enthusiasm" which has greeted every power and ravished every *Moniteur*, is as "indescribable" as ever. The venal writers and fanatic acolytes of Bonapartism exhaust the forms of adulation. Their idol is at once "the New Alexander," and the "Napoleon of Peace;" "a political genius which administers like Colbert, executes like Richelieu, writes like Pascal, and reigns like Bonaparte!" The language of European flattery is unworthy such an ear, and it is worshipped in a rant of fustian and hyperbole, stolen from some newsman of the Byzantine Palace, or some master of the ceremonies of "the Cousin of the Moon."

The enthusiasm, if indescribable, is not absolutely unintelligible. At the affair of Strasburgh, there was found an order for "300

bawlers, with good stout lungs, to shout ‘*Vive l’Empereur!*’”<sup>\*</sup> The prospects of the Empire have improved, and 2,000 pairs of the best of lungs have reverberated in the provinces. The Presidential progress was a triumph to “command.” The Prefects received the commission and the cash. The departmental disbursements were calculated to a nicety. They were in the inverse ratio of the Napoleonian furor, A hundred thousand francs for an imperial town. A million for Bordeaux. If M. Bonaparte complained of the coolness of a population, the answer of the Prefect was conclusive: “the funds assigned to him were not enough.” In well-appointed Prefectures, the responses of the people matched the advances of the treasury. Miraculously converted Socialists left the fields to line the highways. Rural councillors and municipalities hailed the Cæsar with gladiatorial Aves of imperial Rome.† Votive chaplets rained with operative profusion and effect; and girls in white brought bouquets of the best provincial flowers, and verses of the worst provincial cut.

The whip and the spur urged the recalcitrant or sluggish—deputations were marshalled by tuck of drum—the penalties of “contravention” menaced the omission of flags and lanterns—prominent citizens were held responsible for the demonstrations of the rest—no shutters might be closed upon the line of the *cortège*—arrests preceded and followed it—intimidation marched

\* “S’assurer de trois cents gueulards aux vigoureux poumons, qui repartis en avant et sur le flanc de la colonne, pour crier ‘*Vive l’Empereur*,’ paraissent un moyen infaillible de succès.”—*Moniteur*, December 24, 1836. This order is the symbol and the sum of Bonapartism.

† “Ave! Cæsar Imperator,” the inscription on triumphal arches raised to M. Bonaparte by grateful Prefects, and salute of the gladiators to Caligula or Commodus.

with it. The will of the police is law, and personal liberty its pleasure.

Bonapartism brandishes the lash in one hand, and holds the purse in the other.

Toulon is promised millions for its forts, Nîmes for an aqueduct, Marseilles for a cathedral. The Imperial liberality is as boundless as the gratitude of a nation bribed with its own coin. That gratitude is most conspicuous amongst a peasantry officially denounced as communists and brigands. The "enthusiasm" of the towns is in the *Moniteur*.

Unless history lies, the power which rides above the law, invites a bolt beyond the law. When might instals itself as right, revenge is deified as retribution. Irresponsible authority is not of earth. In a free state, institutions check, opinion shapes it. Violence dies of its own excess. Caligula, Commodus, Domitian, Caracalla, fell by the hands of others. Nero perished by his own. Peter and Paul—father and son—sank from that "maladie de famille," which equally afflicts the harem of the Sultan and the palace of the Czar. Superstition curbed the mediæval tyrant,—insurrection waits the despot of to-day.

Fanaticism listens to no conscience but its own. The tyrannicide, deaf to God and man, sees only crime, heeds only vengeance; is Brutus when he strikes, a martyr when he falls. Amid Prætorian cohorts and "indescribable enthusiasm," Louis Napoleon encounters this murderous logic. Marseilles and the police prepared a pasteboard copy of the infernal machine of the Rue Nicaise—Toulon contributed a shot at a review—Moulins an apothecary, who substituted suicide for homicide. The uncle furnishes an atrocious precedent and deadly argument to those who would compass the destruction of the nephew. Napoleon left a legacy of 10,000 francs to Cantillon, who attempted the

life of Wellington, and deliberately justified the assassination of his rival!\*

France is satisfied, but its enthusiasm does not reach to its electors. Universal suffrage has retired, for the time, to its Aventine Mount. In vain, prefects threaten and appeal; nearly three-fourths of the voters shun the electoral urn. The scrutiny is frequently invalidated by the lack of votes; the Government candidates rarely obtain a third of those inscribed; occasionally the Opposition makes a stand; if it carries its list, the Prefect quashes it. Abstention is the only possible protest against such "unlimited liberty."

If France is satisfied, the House of Bonaparte is not. Two banners float in the imperial camp. While Louis Napoleon reigns at the Elysée, Jérôme and his son, Napoleon Bonaparte, revive the game of the House of Orleans under Charles X. A sombre

\* The following is the fifth legacy of the fourth codicil of the Emperor's will. It is worthy of the archives of the Jesuits and of the Empire. The falseness of the reasoning is only surpassed by its devilish immorality. It is worthy of the sophist who poisoned his men at Jaffa—of the traitor who shot the Duc d'Enghien in a ditch:—

"5. *Idem* (10,000) dix mille francs au sous-officier Cantillon qui a essayé un procès, comme prévenu d'avoir voulu assassiner Lord Wellington, ce dont il a été déclaré innocent. Cantillon avait autant de droit d'assassiner cet oligarque que celui-ci de m'envoyer, pour y périr, sur le rocher de Sainte-Hélène. Wellington, qui a proposé cet attentat, cherchait à le justifier sur l'intérêt de la Grande-Bretagne. Cantillon, si vraiment il eût assassiné le lord, se serait couvert, et aurait été justifié par les mêmes motifs, l'intérêt de la France, de se débarrasser d'un général qui d'ailleurs avait violé la capitulation de Paris, et par là s'était rendu responsable du sang des martyrs Ney, Labédoyère, &c., et du crime d'avoir dépouillé les musées contre le texte des traités. ...

"Ce présent codicille est entièrement écrit de notre main, signé et scellé de mes armes.

(Signed)

"NAPOLEON."

hatred and a patent rivalry rankle between the cousins. Napoleon's seat in the Legislative Assembly was on the foremost benches of the mountain. He denounced the policy, if not the legitimacy, of his presidential relative, whose imitations of his uncle have not gone so far as to produce the features of the family. This may explain the significant vote of the council-general presided by Achille Fould, the present Minister of State. It invoked for M. Bonaparte the Augustan perquisite of "adopting" his successor. It was safely guessed that the choice would *not* fall upon the son of Jérôme. The event has responded to those reasonable expectations. The Senate has proved to an admiring world its sturdy independence. Resisting with equal fortitude and virtue the solicitations and the threats of M. Bonaparte, it has conferred upon him, in his own despite, the power of excluding Jérôme and his son. The mummers are worthy of the farce.

The world is tranquil! Its tranquillity is that of a loaded mine, of a shell with the fusee burning. Such peace is nothing but a pause and an armistice. Its guarantee is neither the word nor the oath of Louis Napoleon, but the vigilance and armament of Europe.

But if, no matter why, the Empire is peace, England will loyally accept it. Is it war? *Væ victis!* It will be that mortal strife of principles which began in the last century, and whose shifting tide has bathed every camp in blood. Our flag is freedom. It has made us great, and it will keep us so. Let those who will, hug despotism. We detest, but do not war on it. Our propagandism is our prosperity and our example. If its suicidal frenzy hurls its legions against us, they affront a people strong in its faith, its traditions, and its right, which shattered one Empire, and will face another.

## LETTER X.

## THE ARMY OF FRANCE.

WHILE France is in travail with her bastard Empire—while her spurious throes and sham maternal transports edify the gaping or amuse the grinning crowd—our attention is arrested by that armed democracy, whose exact affinity to the inchoate brat it is not easy to determine—and which may be called, with almost equal justice, father, brother, child, or accoucheur.

She, however, we are told, is “satisfied,” and forgetting her inconstancy and repudiating her ancient spirit of the Fronde, has vowed at the altar a Napoleonian Pritchardism. The imperial “satisfaits” may possibly obtain more popular favour than their predecessors, but as the test or reward of that satisfaction is the world’s tranquillity, it is our interest and right to sift and comprehend it.

The Abbé Sieyès proclaimed his vote for the fate of Louis Seize:—“La mort sans phrase.” The Imperial executioner of this Republic is infinitely less laconic. His attentions have rather resembled those of Madame de Brinvilliers at the Hôtel Dieu. It was noticed as a painful and singular coincidence, that the patients upon whom that amiable lady bestowed her most unwearied care, were sure to be the first to die. The *acqua tofana* of M. Bonaparte is offered with as touching expressions of



solicitude, as generous effusions of loyalty and faith. This, grateful France has found. This, fascinated Europe must remember.

The "Elite of the Nation" will, of course, exhibit in an eminent degree the satisfaction of the country. Its Prætorian bands, at all events, should be content. For them are the coveted quarters of the Capital—for them were the donations of December—the rations and the pay of the "campaign" of Paris—the medals struck from the melted plate and stolen coin of the House of Orleans—ribands and perquisites, crosses and promotion—baubles for their vanity—victims for their passions—and five-franc pieces for their pockets.

The Detachments of the Provinces have not enjoyed a parallel good fortune. The Estaminet and the Ducasse, the Café and the Préfecture, the eternal domino and the inevitable drum, pall upon the martial mind. Ennui consumes—jealousy provokes. Officer and private sigh for the delights and murmur at the monopoly of the Division of the Seine. Yet they too have tasted the pleasures and the liberality of the new Régime. The Socialist hunts, the military commissions, the hedge-side trials, and the summary fusillades, had much to allure and something to content the epauletted defenders of society. Plunder and pay added a zest to the practice of the rifle and exercises of the bayonet, and the balance of the ledger backed the excitement of the chase.

The military tableau, however lit by pyrotechnic and imperial art, is not without its shadows. The Algerian army has been made the penitentiary of disaffected regiments and of dangerous men. Whether Republican principle has ripened, or individual wrong has festered under a Numidian sun, the silence of the Journals and remoteness of the legions render it impossible to say.

The "era of the Cæsars," which entombs the Press and smothers the natural voice of opinion, has revived the Fama Mendax of the ancient world. Her secular clarion, it is true, is gone, and, under the base protection of De Maupas her speech has sunk into a furtive whisper, its instrument or symbol to the penny trumpet of a country fair. She shuns the boulevard and the table d' hôte, public conversation and the light of day, and still, as when she heralded the shame of Dido :—

"Nocte volat cœli medio terræque, per umbram  
Stridens, nec dulci declinat lumina somno.  
Tam ficti pravique tenax, quam nuntia veri."

Rumour, such as this, attaints the loyalty of the Algerian camp. She carries to the cabaret, and even to the barracks, the "Report" of General Randon to the Minister of War. The African commander complains of the sullen and passive resistance on the part of the transported—of their reluctance to receive and their ingratitude to mock the "clemency" of M. Bonaparte—of sympathies expressed by the troops in charge of them—of *their* jealousy and hate of their Prætorian comrades—of an "undesirable" and ugly spirit, which counsels the recall and dispersion of the regiments, and the substitution of a stauncher force.

Rumour having spent her poisonous breath on the Algerian chivalry, straight betakes herself to Rome. There, General Gémeau, who swore by his sword to live for the Republic, tramples on the carcass of her Latian sister. His Voltairian piety kisses the hem of the Papal robe, and Pio Nono counts in his devoted City no truer Son than the repentant Gaul. Alas, for the perversity of men ! While more than a hundred millions and a half revere in name, and more or less in fact, the Holy

Pontiff, his immediate subjects, placed within the sphere of his healing virtues and his sacred presence, are sunk in poverty, steeped in filth, brutalized by ignorance, hardened in corruption, vice, and crime, thieves in the dwelling, assassins in the street, idolaters before the shrine, liars at the altar, and brigands on the road. Cursing their miserable fate and selves, they loathe their infamous Government of priests, and invoke, by turns, and accuse in their despair that gentle Saviour, whose vicegerents have blackened the chronicles of earth by their avarice, tyranny, and crimes.

The "army of Rome" is the Atlas that sustains on its reverential shoulders this celestial system. Transalpine bayonets guard the Pope, and guard him well. They protect him at the same time from his people and himself; and the faltering old man has more than once descried that glittering hedge between escape and him. The Romans hate with an Italian hatred the barbarian victors who have breached their walls, riddled their palaces, defaced their monuments, overturned their sovereignty, and restored their masters. They see, beneath the scarlet gown of the Cardinal and the lousy serge of the begging friar, the spur of the French dragoon; and in many a wine shop or a nightly scuffle, the stiletto has done wild justice on the sabre, and avenged the wrongs of Rome.

Orders of the day and savage penalties are launched against the murderers—the troops are kept on the alert—they are turned into sbirri and police—and they scour the country in pursuit of brigands, who are constantly recruited from the Papal ranks. The "Soldats du Pape," who were once a jest in the mouths of French civilians, have now become a degrading fact in a French *corps d'armée*. Rumour exploits and exaggerates, of course, its discontent and shame.

She gathers audacity in her advance, and steals into the Parisian Garrison itself. She insinuates exasperation at the official honours lavished upon Abd-el-Kader, who had cruelly and treacherously slain their brothers—she notes their indifference, real or assumed, on the 16th of October—she complains in the disguise of Bonapartist Colonels of the Republican Sub-officers—she whispers in the very ear of M. Bonaparte suspicions of Orleanist chiefs—she recites the “words that burn” of Victor Hugo, and the scornful pages of “Napoléon le Petit”—and she slips under the pillow of her *camarade du lit* the letters of the Generals and of the fiery Charras. She hints and prompts conspiracies and vengeance, and compels into her service the most petty fact. The Imperial itinerary, she pretends, is often changed, and still more frequently unknown until the last; military arrests have alarmed Fontainebleau; the 43rd regiment is consigned to Corsica—its colonel leaves it—privates and sub-officers have been tried and shot—and there reigns a sort of military terror.\*

All this may be true or false. Enough for Rumour that she propagates the tales and that the world receives them. They sap power; mine stability; and sow convulsions. If true, the Government rocks upon its basis—if false, it is, at least, suspected. The end is won. Calumny assaults no spotless fame. To doubt is to pollute the wife of Cæsar. When authority is hateful, fables of plots breed them—when loved, they are less odious than absurd.

\* In that miraculous performance of sleight of hand, which is called the plébiscite for the election of the Emperor, this 43rd regiment voted, we are told, unanimously *Oui*. Oh! Mercury, Munchausen, Mandeville, and Mendez Pinto, lights though you were in the firmament of flams, you are twinklers by the side of that “liar of the first magnitude,” the new Cæsarian star!

The Queen of England rules in our affections a thousand times more deeply than even in our Institutions. Does Rumour climb to the person or the throne of that noble Lady? Would it look for credence or expect St. Luke's if it hinted a military conspiracy against *her*? Let despots learn, that, in a country where a free and happy Constitution bids the monarch reign, not govern, that monarch's virtues, intelligence, and patriotism have made her reign *and* govern too. In a Pythagorean cycle of righteous Princes, if any such could be, Antoninus Pius had returned to earth, with a Roman name, but in a woman's form. His rampart fenced the land from the Barbarians. Her galleys rule the sea.

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